Eating well to protect your heart

Where to start
Did you know that poor diet is a leading cause of coronary heart disease? Healthy eating is not about “good” and “bad” foods or restrictive diets. It’s about making small changes that you can continue long term.

The 5 key parts of a heart healthy eating pattern are to eat:

1. Plenty of vegetables, fruits and wholegrains
2. A variety of healthy protein sources especially fish and seafood, legumes (such as beans and lentils), nuts and seeds. Smaller amounts of eggs and lean poultry can be included in a heart healthy diet. If choosing red meat, make sure the meat is lean and limit to 1-3 times a week.
3. Unflavoured milk, yoghurt and cheese. Those with high blood cholesterol should choose reduced fat varieties.
4. Healthy fat choices with nuts, seeds, avocados, olives and their oils for cooking.
5. Herbs and spices to flavour foods, instead of adding salt.

This style of eating is naturally low in unhealthy fats, salt and added sugar and rich in wholegrains, fibre, vitamins and healthy fats.

Cook at home more
Meals and snacks purchased outside of the home are often high in kilojoules, salt, added sugar and unhealthy fats. Control what’s in your meals by cooking at home more often.

- Use take-aways and restaurant meals as occasional treats only (once a week or less)
- Take lunch from home
- Go to heartfoundation.org.au/recipes for recipes, weekly meal plans, tips and shopping lists to make your life easier.

Dinner ideas
Planning ahead and using leftovers in interesting ways can help make lunch and dinner meals easier.

- Try chopping baked vegetables from yesterday’s roast and adding to some pasta or rice together with some canned cannellini beans and chilli flakes.
- Baked vegetables like pumpkin, zucchini and capsicum can be added to sandwiches, wraps and salads.

Smart snacking
The snacks you choose make a difference so make them count. Heart healthy snacks include:

- a piece of fruit with unflavoured yoghurt
- wholegrain crackers with cheese
- a small handful of unsalted nuts and seeds
- vegetable sticks with a healthy dip or nut butter
- choose water as a drink
## Easy food swaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SWAP THIS</th>
<th>FOR THIS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potato crisps</td>
<td>Unsalted nuts and seeds</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Air popped popcorn – try adding spices or chilli flakes instead of salt and butter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot chips</td>
<td>Home-made sweet potato wedges (toss wedges of sweet potato with olive oil and bake @180C for 20-30 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruit yoghurt or ice cream</td>
<td>Natural yoghurt with added fresh or frozen berries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ham sandwich</td>
<td>Cheese and salad sandwich on wholemeal bread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meat pie</td>
<td>Chicken and salad wrap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cream cheese, cheese spread, cheese sticks</td>
<td>Mozzarella, edam, cheddar, cottage and swiss cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Herbs, spices, pepper, garlic, chilli or ginger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soft drinks, fruit juice or cordial</td>
<td>Water, mineral water or sparkling water – try adding lemon, lime or orange slices to flavour the water without sugar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butter, palm oil, coconut oil, lard</td>
<td>Olive oil, peanut oil, sunflower oil, margarine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Top 5 tips

1. **Aim for 5 servings of vegetables a day.** Add vegetables to salads, soups and casseroles or try them as a snack.
2. **Go for grain.** Replace white bread and rice with wholegrain and seeded bread, brown rice and high fibre breakfast cereals.
3. **Eat more legumes like lentils, chickpeas and beans.** Use dried and cooked or canned varieties either alone or add to dishes to reduce the amount of meat.
4. **Aim for 2-3 servings of fish a week.** Canned fish in spring water or olive oil can be used; just avoid those canned in brine.
5. **Try introducing at least one meat-free day a week.** You can find lots of quick and tasty meat-free recipes at [heartfoundation.org.au/recipes](http://heartfoundation.org.au/recipes)
Heart healthy changes I can make now

Making small changes daily adds up over time. It can be helpful to focus on 2 or 3 changes at a time. Take note below on the changes you are going to start with.

1: ...........................................................................................................................
2: ...........................................................................................................................
3: ...........................................................................................................................

For more information

- For more information on healthy eating visit heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating
- For recipes heartfoundation.org.au/recipes
- To speak to a health professional, call the Heart Foundation Helpline on 13 11 12
- To find a dietitian in your area visit daa.asn.au
- To find a walking group near you visit walking.heartfoundation.org.au