

6 Steps to Heart Healthy Eating

All of these steps are important to help you control your weight and lower your blood cholesterol. To begin, choose one step; move onto others when you are ready.

“Eat Less Fat”...the most important thing to remember.

1 Reduce all added fats

- limit the fat that you add to food and in cooking to 3 to 6 teaspoons per day
- when cooking foods: broil, bake, steam, or microwave; avoid frying and deep frying
- better choices include: canola oil, olive oil, flax oil, nuts and seeds, nut butters and soft margarines without hydrogenated fats
- choose less often: butter, hard margarines, lard, shortening, coconut milk, ‘popcorn topping’, cream cheese, and gravy

2 Eat more whole grain products

- better choices include: 100% whole wheat bread, bagels, pita, rolled oats, brown rice, barley, whole grain hot & cold cereals, crisp breads and pasta
- choose less often: granola, croissants, donuts, pastries, scones, biscuits and commercial muffins

3 Eat more vegetables and fruit

- eat vegetables raw, in salads, steamed, microwaved, or stir “fried” with broth (limit regular salad dressings as well as sauces made with butter, margarine, and cheese)
- better choices include: dark green & orange vegetables such as broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, carrots, squash & sweet potatoes; and orange fruits such as papaya, cantaloupe & oranges

4 Choose lower fat milk products

- better choices include: skim & 1% milk and yogurt, lower fat cheese (less than 20% milk fat) and lower fat sour cream
- choose less often: high fat cheese (more than 20% milk fat) and cream products

5 Select smaller, leaner portions of meat & alternatives

- eat 2 small servings of lean choices each day (1 serving = the size of a half to a full deck of cards)
- choose fish at least twice per week (fresh, frozen or canned in water)
- instead of meat choose baked beans, chick peas, split peas, or lentils at least once a week
- choose less often: bacon, bologna, salami, sausages, marbled meat, egg yolk, organ meats, regular hamburger, and paté

6 Limit high fat snacks and desserts

- better snack choices include: vegetables, fruit, whole grain and low fat milk products
- choose desserts low in fat such as fruit, low fat puddings, angel food cake, ices and sherbet
- choose less often: chips, cheezies, chocolates, cookies, pastries, microwave/movie popcorn, ice cream and donuts

*For information on serving sizes, refer to **Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating**.*

Dial-A-Dietitian can answer your quick nutrition questions (eg. vegetarian choices).

Within B.C., call toll-free 1-800- 667-DIET (3438). In the Lower Mainland, call 732-9191.

“6 Steps” is intended for adults.

Be More Active Every Day!

Being more active helps control your weight and lower your blood cholesterol, while improving your overall health and vitality. Find an activity you can enjoy regularly, like walking the dog.

Why Weight?

If you need to lose weight, the healthy way is by following "6 Steps". Avoid overeating and gradually increase your activity.

Saturated and "Trans" Fats

Saturated fats come mostly from animals. "Trans" fats come mostly from vegetable oils that have been made solid through a process called hydrogenation. Both are risky to heart health. "6 Steps" will help you avoid saturated fats. To limit "trans" fats, read ingredient labels and choose fewer foods that contain hydrogenated vegetable oils. Most margarines (especially hard ones), creamy sauces, commercial baked goods such as donuts, cookies, and crackers, and snack foods such as potato chips are foods made with hydrogenated oils.

What About Cholesterol?

The amount of cholesterol in your blood is influenced by many factors. Cholesterol in food has less effect on blood cholesterol than total fat in food. Reducing total fat by following the "6 Steps" is the most effective way to lower your blood cholesterol while still providing enough fat for healthy skin, important hormones and digestion.

Many foods labeled "cholesterol free" are high in fat. Check the nutrition label to find lower fat choices. Go on a grocery store nutrition tour to learn more. Contact your Health Unit Nutritionist for tour information.

Here are some cookbooks with lower fat recipes:

- *LightHearted Every Day Cooking*, by Anne Lindsay
- *Good Food Cookbook*, by Jane Brody
- *Heart Smart Cooking on a Shoestring*, by Julie Watson
- *Full of Beans*, by Kay Spicer and Violet Currie
- *Simply HeartSmart Cooking*, by Bonnie Stern

Fat can really sneak up on you! Check this chart to see if there are lower fat choices you can make to reduce your total fat intake: ● = 1 pat of fat (4 grams of fat) ∅ = No fat

Higher Fat Choices

- 1 teaspoon of butter (on baked potatoes) ●
- 1 teaspoon margarine or butter ●
- 2 teaspoons cream cheese ●
- 1 tablespoon salad dressing ●

- 1 croissant ● ● ●
- store bought muffin ● ● ● to ● ● ● ● ● ●

- 1 cup 2% milk ●
- 50g regular cheese ● ● ● ●

- 1/2 chicken breast roasted with skin ● ▸
- fast food fried fish sandwich ● ● ● ● ● ● ▸
- 1/2 cup alfredo sauce ● ● ● ● ● ●

- 24 potato chips ● ● ● ● ● ●
- 5 snack crackers ●

- 4 shortbread cookies ● ●

Try Instead

- 1 tablespoon light sour cream (on baked potatoes) ▸
- 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise ●
- 2 teaspoons jam ∅
- 1 tablespoon fat free salad dressing ∅

- 1 bagel ▸
- home made muffin ● to ● ●

- 1 cup skim milk ∅
- 50g low fat (20% m.f.) cheese ● ● ▸

- 1/2 chicken breast roasted without skin ▸
- fast food "lean" hamburger ● ●
- 1 cup tomato sauce ▸

- 24 pretzels ● (very high in salt)
- 5 melba toasts ∅

- 4 gingersnap cookies ▸

If you need help following the "6 Steps", have your doctor refer you to a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist.

For more information on heart healthy living, contact the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. and the Yukon at 1-800-663-2010.