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Heart Health

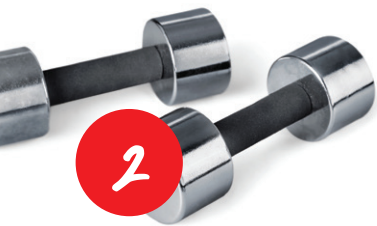
Eating for **HEART HEALTH**

Eating for a healthy heart means making consistent healthy eating choices over a long period of time. Here are some simple guidelines for you to follow.



1 Limit sugar and alcohol.

They provide few nutrients but many calories. Therefore, they contribute to high cholesterol by increasing body weight.



2 Certain habits, such as cigarette smoking and a sedentary life, can increase the risk of heart disease.

Cigarette smokers should quit. Regular aerobic exercise (at least 20 to 30 minutes, 4 times a week) can lower cholesterol levels and help to prevent the build-up of cholesterol plaque. It can also reduce stress that may cause high blood pressure, another heart disease risk.



3 Fish should be eaten often, 3 times per week.

Research indicates that certain deep-sea fish: mackerel, salmon, herring, albacore tuna, lake trout contain oil called omega-3 fatty acid. This oil may help to lower blood cholesterol as well as triglycerides. Use monounsaturated oils such as extra virgin olive oils and try to include 1 teaspoon a day of flaxseed oil into your diet, add it to smoothies or salad dressings. Raw, unsalted walnuts and almonds can also help reduce cholesterol.



4 Reduce coffee and increase green tea (sencha) intake.

It helps to lower cholesterol and helps prevent atherosclerosis, heart attack and stroke.



5 Avoid high sodium content in foods.

Some patients with high cholesterol also have high blood pressure. Reducing sodium can help to keep blood pressure within normal limits. Table salt is about 1/2 sodium. Sodium is also an ingredient in many commercially processed foods. Read product labels and use products with no more than 300 mg of sodium per serving. Herbs and spices can be used in place of salt to add flavour and variety to meals.



6 Increase your consumption of colourful vegetables, particularly dark green leafy vegetables.

They are full of essential vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and are low in saturated fat and carbohydrates.



7 Eat 20 to 30 grams of dietary fibre every day.

Foods such as legumes, oats, barley, brown rice, freshly ground linseeds, apples (grating them increases the fibre level), strawberries, and carrots are good to eat because they contain soluble fibre. Fibre helps to maintain normal cholesterol levels & help promote healthy bowel flora (the good bacteria colony in your gut).



8 Choose meats carefully.

Choose the best quality meat available with the least amount of marbling (white fat). Select the leaner cuts such as lamb backstrap, chicken breast, turkey mince, kangaroo fillet, eye fillet, pork tenderloin etc.



9 Reduce refined carbohydrates.

Choose unrefined wholegrains such as brown rice, oats, sourdough breads, amaranth, quinoa, kamut, spelt, etc. These are less processed and provide sustainable energy for the body. Limit refined carbohydrates such as white rice, white and wholemeal pasta, white bread, rice crackers, lollies, cakes, biscuits, muffins etc.



10 Eating out can be a challenge.

Avoid fast food restaurants; their foods are usually high in fats and sodium. However, many restaurants now understand the need to provide items for clients on fat or cholesterol-restricted diets. Ask about ingredients and how foods are prepared.