Heart Healthy Eating

Saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, fiber — Does this sound like too much to think about? Choose vegetarian foods that maintain a healthy body weight and include whole grains, dried beans, vegetables, and fruit. You’ll soon find that without much effort, you’re on your way to a heart healthy diet.

• Sauté in water instead of oil or use small amounts of olive or canola oil.
• Use low-fat cooking methods like broiling, steaming, roasting, baking, poaching, boiling, microwaving, or stir-frying with little or no oil.
• When baking, cut the oil, butter, or margarine in half and replace it with water, juice, applesauce, or puréed prunes.
• Replace whole eggs (when used as a binder) with bananas, tofu, applesauce, ground flaxseed, or egg replacers such as Ener-G or Bob’s Red Mill brands.
• Prepare foods using as little salt as possible.

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Heart Healthy Shopping

• Buy more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes.
• Buy snacks like popcorn (air pop and serve plain or with a drizzle of olive oil), fresh fruits and vegetables, rice cakes, and reduced sodium pretzels instead of chips, crackers, and cookies that are high in hydrogenated fats and sodium.
• Buy whole grain breads and cereals that are high fiber. Limit low fiber refined breads and cereals and high fat products like most croissants, muffins, and granola cereal.
• Buy plain fresh or frozen vegetables instead of vegetables in cheese, cream, or butter sauces.
• Look for low-sodium or reduced sodium versions of your favorite foods.
• Use nutrition labels to help choose foods lower in saturated and trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, and total fat.

Heart Healthy Eating Out

• Choose foods like pasta and tomato sauce, stir-fried dinners (request that they be made with little oil), steamed vegetables, pizza without cheese, plain baked potatoes, vegetable-based soups, and fruit or sorbet for dessert. At salad bars, choose lots of fresh vegetables and fruits. Avoid mayonnaise-based salads such as most potato salads and coleslaw, cheese, and salad dressings unless low-fat.
• Ask that dressings and sauces be served on the side so you can control the amount you eat.
• Ask that your foods be prepared with little fat or salt.