A GUIDE TO HEART-HEALTHY
FOOD HABITS

1. Control Portion Size

Learn how to right-size food portions by keeping these visual comparisons in mind:

Fruits	Veggies	Carbs	Proteins	Fats
🍎 = 🎾	🥕 = ⚾	🍞 = 🔵	🥩 = 🃏	🥄 = 🎲🎲

2. Eat More Vegetables and Fruit

Veggies and fruits are low in calories and high in dietary fiber: a combination that can help fight cardiovascular disease. Make smart snacking easier and more convenient by keeping washed and cut veggies in your refrigerator. Look for recipes that feature fresh produce as the main ingredient like vegetable stir-fry or fresh fruit mixed into salads.

3. Choose Whole Grain Foods

Whole grains differ from refined grains in that "whole" refers to grains that have not been stripped of their naturally occurring germ and bran. Whole grains can be single foods like quinoa, popcorn, brown rice and oatmeal, or ingredients in products like buckwheat in pancakes and whole wheat flour in bread.

4. Limit Unhealthy Fats

Limiting saturated and trans fats is critical in reducing your blood cholesterol. That's important because high cholesterol contributes to plaque buildup in your arteries (atherosclerosis), which increases your risk of heart attack and stroke.
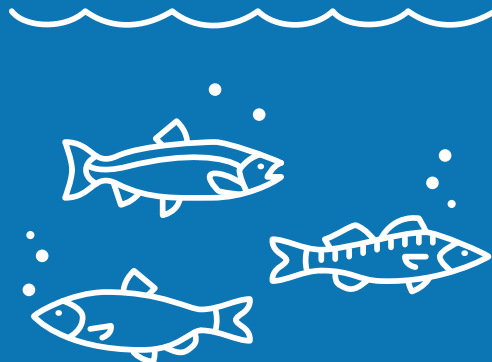
How much fat is too much?

The American Heart Association recommends no more than 11-13 grams of saturated fat per day based on a 2,000 calorie-per-day diet. Trans fats should be avoided.

5. Choose Low-Fat Proteins

Proteins	Low-Fat	Omega-3
Lean Meat	✓	
Poultry	✓	
Low-Fat Diary	✓	
Legumes	✓	
Salmon	✓	✓
Mackarel	✓	✓
Herring	✓	✓

Pay attention to how you prepare foods, too. A skinless chicken breast is less fatty than a fried chicken patty. Try substituting plant-based protein for animal protein. A soy or bean burger has less fat and more fiber than a traditional hamburger.

6. Reduce Sodium In Your Dlet

Sodium can increase blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease and stroke. The American Heart Association recommends adults consume no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day.

Even if you don't reach for the salt shaker, sodium is often found in prepared foods, including those that don't taste salty. The Centers for Disease Control estimates more than 70% of the sodium Americans consume comes from processed and restaurant foods.

7. Allow Yourself an Occasional Treat

It's OK to indulge every now and then. But you should strive to make that the exception, not the rule. The more important goal is to eat healthy foods most of the time.

Add More Fiber to Your Diet

An easy way to add healthy fat (and fiber) to your diet is ground flaxseed. Flaxseeds are small brown seeds that are high in fiber and omega-3 fatty acids.