

WHAT ARE CHOLESTEROL-LOWERING MEDICATIONS?

If your doctor has decided that you need to take medicine to reduce high cholesterol, it's because you're at high risk for heart disease or stroke. Usually the treatment combines healthy lifestyle changes including diet and physical activity, and medicine.

Most heart disease and many strokes are caused by a buildup of fat, cholesterol and other substances called **plaque** in the inner walls of your arteries. The arteries can become clogged and narrowed, and blood flow is reduced. If a blood clot forms and blocks blood flow to your heart, it causes a heart attack. If a blood clot blocks an artery leading to or in the brain, a stroke results.

By following your doctor's advice, you can help prevent these diseases.

What type of medicine may I be prescribed?

Various medications can lower blood cholesterol levels. Statins are recommended for most patients because they are the only cholesterol-lowering drug class that has been directly associated with reduced risk for heart attack and stroke.

Statins [HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors] prevent the production of cholesterol in the liver. Their major effect is to lower LDL cholesterol. Some names are lovastatin, pravastatin, simvastatin, fluvastatin and atorvastatin.

You should talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of statin therapy if you fall into one of the following groups:

- Adults with known cardiovascular disease, including stroke, caused by atherosclerosis
- Adults with diabetes, aged 40–75 years with an LDL [bad] cholesterol level 70–189 mg/dL
- Adults with LDL [bad] cholesterol level of greater than or equal to 190 mg/dL
- Adults, aged 40 – 75 years, with LDL [bad] level of 70–189 mg/dL and a 7.5% or greater 10-year risk of developing cardiovascular disease from atherosclerosis

Some people who do not fall into these four major categories may also benefit from statin therapy.

Learn more about cholesterol at: heart.org/cholesterol

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What other medications may be prescribed?

Your healthcare provider will monitor your progress with your statin therapy and recommended lifestyle changes. If you are having serious side effects or don't have the desired response to statin therapy and lifestyle changes alone, he or she may consider other medications as well.

- **Bile acid binders [resins]** cause the intestine to get rid of more cholesterol. Some names are cholestyramine, colestipol and colesvelam.
- **Fibrates** are especially good for lowering triglyceride [blood fat] levels and, to a lesser extent, raising HDL [good] cholesterol levels. Some names are gemfibrozil, clofibrate and fenofibrate.
- **Niacin [nicotinic acid]** is a B vitamin that limits the production of blood fats in the liver. Take this only if your doctor has prescribed it. It can lower total cholesterol, LDL [bad] cholesterol and triglyceride [blood fat] levels. It can also raise HDL [good] cholesterol levels.
- **PCSK9 Inhibitors** bind to and inactivate a protein in the liver in order to lower LDL [bad] cholesterol. They can be given in combination with a statin. Some names are alirocumab and evolocumab.
- **Selective cholesterol absorption inhibitors**, like ezetimibe, work by preventing cholesterol from being absorbed in the intestine.

Your doctor will work with you to decide which medicine, or combination of medicines, is best for you. Always follow your doctor's instructions carefully, and let the doctor know if you have any side effects. Never stop taking your medicine on your own!

How do I know if my medicine is working?

Your doctor will test your blood cholesterol level when needed. Together with your doctor, set a goal and ask how long it may take to reach that goal.

Learn more about cholesterol at: heart.org/cholesterol

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CHOLESTEROL DRUGS

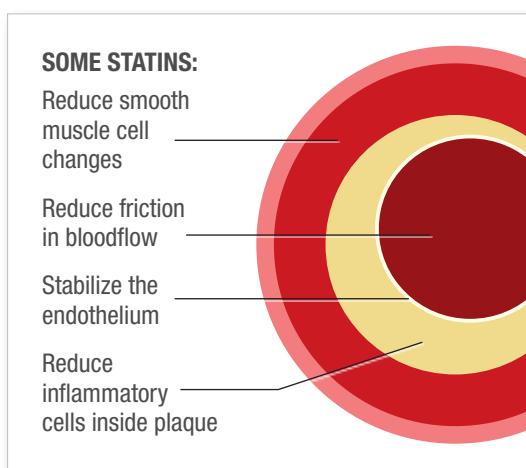
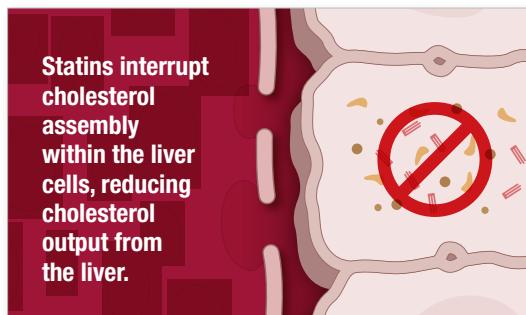
PEOPLE WITH HIGH CHOLESTEROL are often prescribed medications by their doctors to help lower their cholesterol. The most common cholesterol-lowering drugs are called **statins**.

Statins disrupt the production of cholesterol by blocking a specific enzyme inside cholesterol-producing liver cells. This results in less cholesterol being released into the bloodstream.

Some statins also reduce the inflammatory process caused by elevated cholesterol within blood vessel walls. When the body has a reduced reaction to the invading cholesterol, fewer macrophages are allowed to travel into the artery walls, where they would have formed foam cells and plaque.

When plaque stops growing inside an artery, the fibrous outer coating remains strong and less likely to rupture. This is called a **stable plaque**.

Statins help to lower cholesterol and maintain the integrity of arteries.



CHOLESTEROL: MYTHS VS. FACTS



Myth: You don't need your cholesterol checked until you've reached middle age.

Fact: Guidelines recommend getting your cholesterol and other risk factors checked beginning at age 20, and at least every 4-6 years after that.

Myth: Only overweight and obese people have high cholesterol.

Fact: People of any body type can have high cholesterol. Being overweight or obese increases your chances of having high cholesterol, but being thin doesn't protect you from the problem. Regardless of your weight, diet, and level of physical activity, you should have your cholesterol checked on a regular basis.

Myth: Having high cholesterol is only a man's problem.

Fact: Cholesterol levels tend to rise as people age or gain weight, regardless of gender. It's true that premenopausal women tend to have higher levels of estrogen, which raises the levels of HDL ("good") cholesterol. But women going through menopause or who are postmenopausal tend to have higher levels of LDL ("bad") cholesterol, as estrogen levels have declined as a result.

Myth: If your health care provider hasn't mentioned your cholesterol levels, you're OK.

Fact: You are responsible for your own health. Once you've turned 20, ask your health care provider to conduct a cholesterol test, assess your risk factors, and determine your risk for heart attack or stroke. If you're between 40 and 79, ask your health care provider to assess your 10-year risk.

Myth: Your cholesterol level is a result of your diet and physical activity level.

Fact: True, diet and physical activity affect your cholesterol, as well, but they're not the only factors. Getting older and being overweight or obese also impact your cholesterol level. Some people are born with high cholesterol levels

that they've inherited from their parents. Regardless, it's very important to eat a heart-healthy diet and get plenty of moderate-intensity physical activity in order to reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.

Myth: Taking cholesterol medicines means you don't have to make diet and lifestyle changes.

Fact: It's important to take your medicines exactly as they're prescribed. But the best ways to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke are to eat a heart-healthy diet and get at least 40 minutes of moderate to intense aerobic exercise three to four times per week.

Myth: If the Nutrition Label shows no cholesterol, the food is heart healthy.

Fact: Many "no cholesterol" or even "low fat" foods are high in other types of "bad" fats, such as saturated and trans fats. Be sure to check the food label for saturated fat, trans fat, and total calories. Also, be aware that the serving size that those numbers are based on may be smaller than the entire package.

Myth: Switching from butter to margarine will help lower cholesterol.

Fact: Not necessarily. Butter is high in saturated fat and has some trans fat in it, too, but some types of margarine are even higher in both of those types of fat. Liquid margarines and soft margarines in a tub tend to be lower in "bad" fats, but check the Nutrition Label for the exact information you need.

Myth: Children don't need to worry about cholesterol.

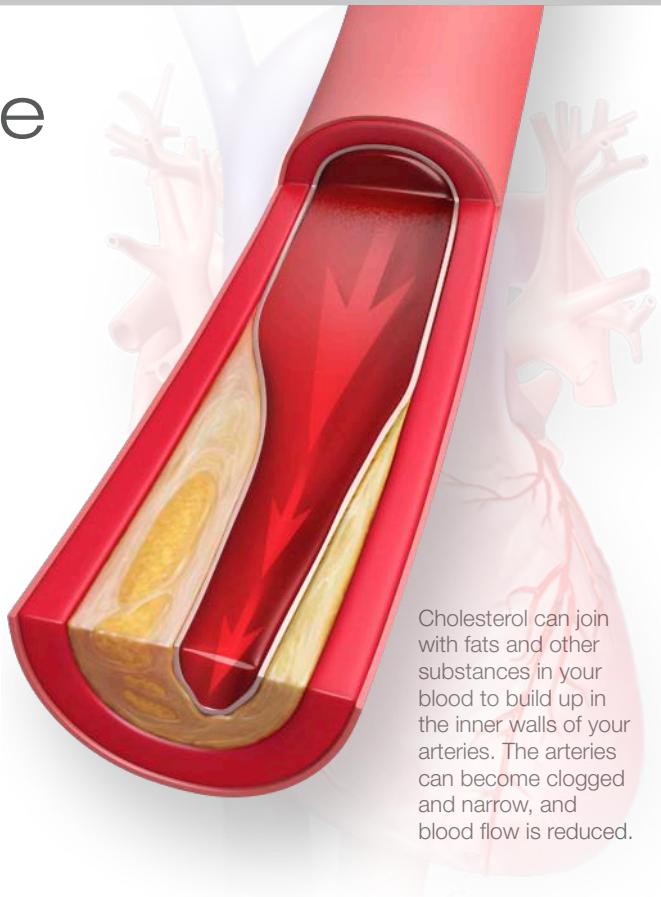
Fact: Children can have high cholesterol levels, just like adults. This is particularly true for children who inherit high cholesterol levels from one or both parents, a condition called familial hypercholesterolemia (FH). These children are at high risk for premature heart attack or stroke. Early diagnosis and treatment is critical in these cases.



How Can I Improve My Cholesterol?

There are lifestyle changes that you can make to improve your cholesterol. You can eat healthy foods, reach and maintain a healthy weight and be physically active. Some people also need to take medicine to lower their cholesterol because changing their lifestyle and diet isn't enough. Your healthcare providers can help you set up a plan to improve your cholesterol.

Most heart and blood vessel disease is caused by a buildup of cholesterol, plaque and other fatty deposits in artery walls. The arteries that feed the heart can become so clogged that the blood flow is reduced, causing chest pain. If a blood clot forms and blocks the artery, a heart attack can occur. Similarly, if a blood clot blocks an artery leading to or in the brain, a stroke results.



Cholesterol can join with fats and other substances in your blood to build up in the inner walls of your arteries. The arteries can become clogged and narrow, and blood flow is reduced.

What should I eat?

Focus on eating foods low in saturated and *trans* fats such as:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables.
- A variety of whole grain foods like whole grain bread, cereal, pasta and brown rice. (At least half of the servings should be whole grains.)
- Fat-free, 1 percent and low-fat milk products.
- Poultry without skin and lean meats. When you choose to eat red meat and pork, select options labeled “loin” and “round.” These cuts usually have the least amount of fat.
- Fatty fish such as salmon, trout, albacore tuna and sardines. Enjoy at least 8 ounces of non-fried fish each week, which may be divided over two 3.5- to 4-ounce servings.
- Unsalted nuts, seeds, and legumes (dried beans or peas).
- Nontropical vegetable oils like canola, corn, olive, or safflower oils.

What should I limit?

- Foods with a lot of sodium (salt)
- Sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages
- Red meats and fatty meats that aren’t trimmed
- Meats that have been processed with a lot of sodium
- Full-fat dairy products such as whole milk, cream, ice cream, butter, and cheese
- Baked goods made with saturated and *trans* fats like donuts, cakes cookies
- Foods that list the words “hydrogenated oils” in the ingredients panel
- Saturated oils like coconut oil, palm oil and palm kernel oil
- Solid fats like shortening, stick margarine and lard
- Fried foods

(continued)

**What are some cooking tips for me?**

- Add a variety of fruits and vegetables to your meals.
- Use a rack to drain off fat when you broil, roast or bake poultry and meats.
- Look for leaner cuts if you choose to eat meat.
- Don't baste with drippings; use wine, fruit juice or marinade.
- Broil or grill instead of pan-frying.
- Cut off all visible fat from meat before cooking.
- Remove the skin from poultry pieces.
- Use a vegetable oil spray to brown or sauté foods.
- Serve smaller portions of higher-calorie dishes.
- Use low-fat, low-sodium options instead of regular cheese.

**HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?**

- 1** Call **1-800-AHA-USA1**
(1-800-242-8721), or visit **heart.org** to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2** Sign up to get *Heart Insight*, a free magazine for heart patients and their families, at **heartinsight.org**.
- 3** Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at **heart.org/supportnetwork**.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

What about eating out?

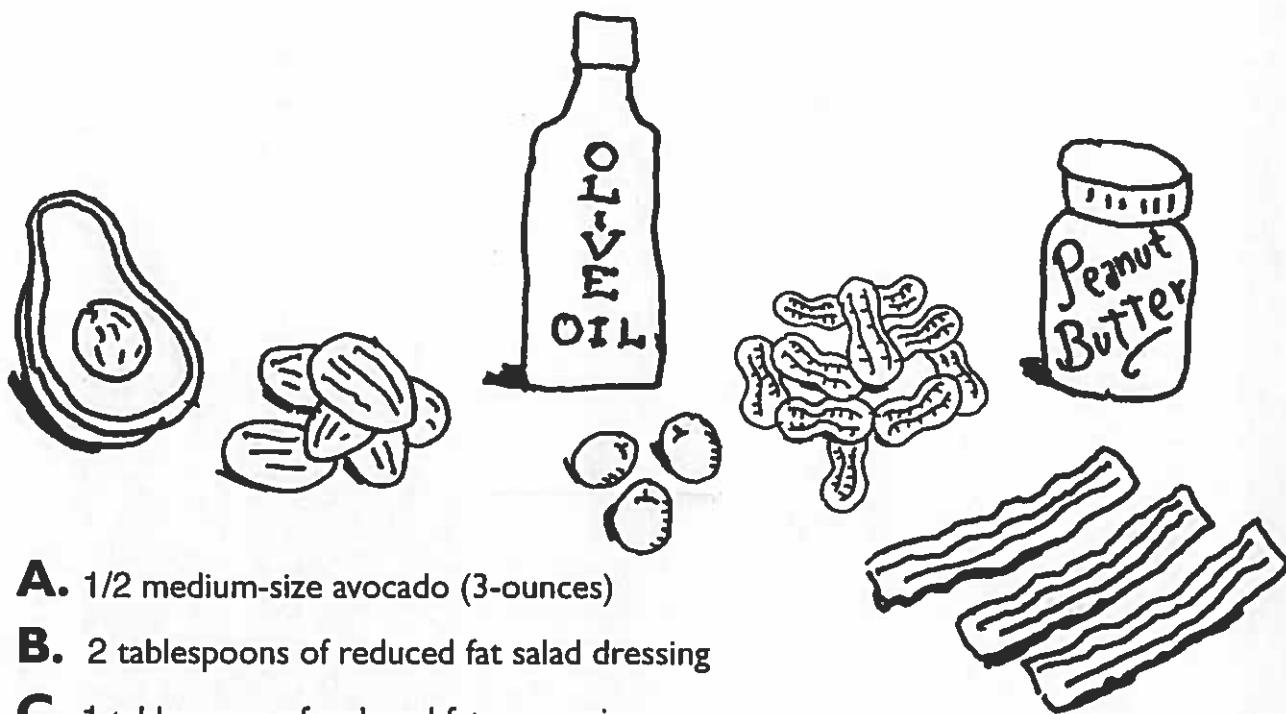
Why are weight control and physical activity important?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **heart.org/answersbyheart** to learn more.

KNOW YOUR FATS

Knowing how much fat you eat can help you control your weight, if you need to, and stay healthy. Below is an easy way to find out how much you know about the amount of fat in common foods many of us eat. Circle only the food servings below that have about 5 grams (one serving) of fat. If you get almost all of them right, great. If not tell your doctor or diabetes educator you want to learn more about eating healthy fats as part of your meal plan.



- A. 1/2 medium-size avocado (3-ounces)
- B. 2 tablespoons of reduced fat salad dressing
- C. 1 tablespoon of reduced fat mayonaise
- D. 1 tablespoon of light cream cheese
- E. 1 tablespoon of salad dressing
- F. 3 tablespoons of peanut butter
- G. 1 teaspoon of mayonnaise
- H. 1 tablespoon of cream cheese
- I. 2 tablespoons of sour cream
- J. 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- K. 10 peanuts
- L. 3 slices of bacon
- M. 6 almonds
- N. 1 teaspoon of tub margarine
- O. 1 teaspoon of butter
- P. 3 small olives

ANSWER: 1 fat serving = 5 grams of fat.
A: 15, B: 5, C: 5, D: 8, E: 5, F: 16, G: 4, H: 5, I: 5, J: 14, K: 5, L: 9, M: 5, N: 5, O: 5, P: 15

GOODFATS BADFATS

Avoid...

Trans Fat

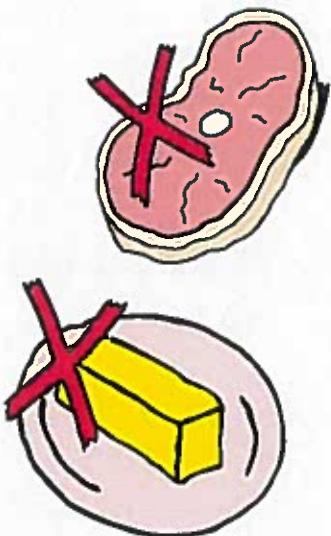
French Fries
Fresh Donuts
Vegetable shortening
Margarine
Deep-fried foods
Many fresh baked foods
(pies, cookies)
Some packaged snacks
and candy



Eat less...

Saturated Fat

Butter
Whole Milk
Cream
Red Meat
Dessert (cake, ice cream)
Animal skin (chicken, turkey)



Eat...

GOOD Fats

Oily fish (salmon, trout)
Olive oil
Nuts
Canola oil
Avocado
Soybean or Corn Oil



Always read the Nutrition Facts label on foods when you shop.
Your goal is not a fat-free diet, but a diet low in bad fats.

Eating healthy foods, every day, is one of the best ways to control diabetes!

A Healthy Weight has Great Health Benefits!

- ✓ Decreased risk of heart disease
- ✓ Decreased risk for type 2 diabetes
- ✓ Decreased risk for breathing problems while you sleep (obstructive sleep apnea)
- ✓ Decreased risk for many cancers
- ✓ Feeling better and having more energy

It is never too late to start!



Balance Food and Activity for a Healthy Weight

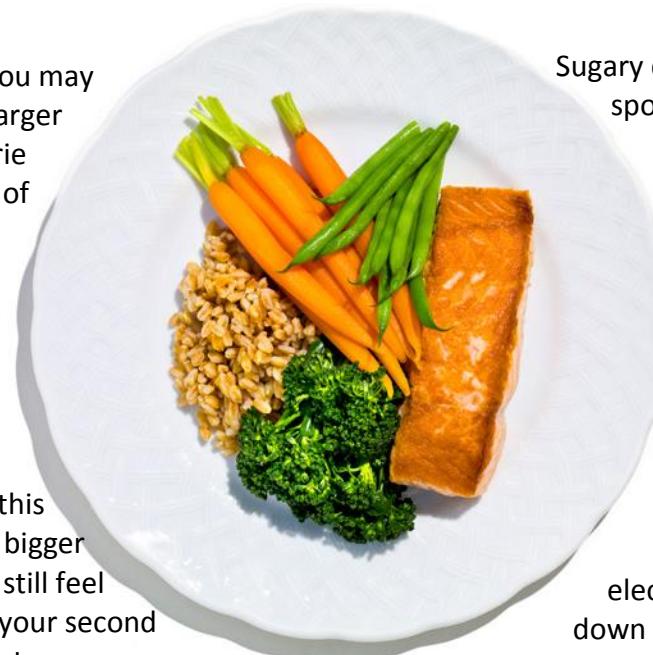
Eating healthy foods is important for your wellness, but losing weight really depends on the **amount** of food you are eating over time. If you eat more calories than your body needs on most days, those calories are stored as fat. The **only** way to lose weight is to eat less than what your body burns for fuel. This causes your body to turn to the stored calories (fat) for fuel.

Helpful Tips for a Healthy Weight

It is best to work on changing only 1–2 behaviors at a time. The key is not to think that you are “going on a diet.” Your goal is to learn life-long habits and make changes that will last.

Do not skip meals, especially breakfast.

If you skip a meal, you may feel very hungry and may eat larger amounts of high-fat, high-calorie foods later. Eat within an hour of waking up, and again about every 4 hours (small meals). You should also avoid eating too late in the evening (about 2 hours before bedtime).



Eat smaller amounts at meals and snacks.

A great way to do this is to eat off a smaller plate (no bigger than 9 inches) at meals. If you still feel hungry, choose vegetables for your second serving. For snacks, measure out one portion to avoid over-snacking.

At mealtimes, fill at least $\frac{1}{2}$ your plate with vegetables.

Start with a salad of leafy, green vegetables with no more than one tbsp dressing. Fill at least half your plate with vegetables. Non-starchy vegetables are filling and have a lot of fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Do not drink your calories.

Sugary drinks like soda, juice, lemonade, sport drinks, and sweetened coffees have many calories. It is best to drink water. Coffee and tea with no sugar are okay. Calorie-free flavors added to water or diet soda *on occasion* are okay, too. Limit skim or low-fat milk to no more than about 2 cups (16 ounces) per day.

Eat mindfully.

Reduce distractions and be “present” while eating. Turn off electronics, put away papers, and sit down to your meal. You will enjoy your food more and you may eat LESS.

Move your body every day.

Physical activities that make your heart beat faster will help you reach a healthy weight and keep your heart healthy. Increase your current activity level slowly with a goal of at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey. Talk with an RDN for the answers to your nutrition questions.

Why Follow a Heart-Healthy Eating Pattern if You Are Asian Indian?

A heart-healthy eating pattern will lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. An Asian Indian eating pattern can be very heart-healthy because it is high in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, lentils, raw or unsalted nuts, liquid vegetable oils, and spices.



However, Asian Indian meals can also be high in refined carbohydrate foods like white rice and white flour, unhealthy fats like ghee, vanaspati and coconut milk, sugary drinks and desserts, and salt.

Eating these foods often can increase heart disease risk factors like high blood pressure, blood sugar, triglycerides and cholesterol, and cause excess fat around your waist. This group of risk factors is called the *metabolic syndrome* and increases your risk of heart disease. The metabolic syndrome is more commonly found in Asian Indians. The **National Lipid Association** recommends trying the *heart healthy tips below* with your favorite Asian Indian meals to reduce your risk of metabolic syndrome and heart disease.

Tips for Eating Heart-Healthy Asian Indian Style

Eat whole grains

- Add oatmeal or soy flour to chapati flour
- Use 100% whole-wheat flour
- Replace white rice with brown rice



Choose plant-based proteins

- Use tofu in place of paneer
- Use Lentils (daals) or legumes like chickpeas and black-eyed beans

Reduce unhealthy fats

- Use canola, olive, or soybean oil
- Use pureed almonds or cashews (nut butters) or non-fat yogurt in sauces and curries
- Avoid ghee, vanaspati, butter, cream and coconut oil

Limit starches

- Limit starchy foods to $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate
- Eat less rice if eating chapati or naan
- Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with non-starchy vegetables like spinach, okra and broccoli

Dine out more healthfully

- Avoid deep fried foods
- Avoid foods made with coconut oil
- Order curries with no cream or butter
- Choose chicken or fish cooked in a tandoor
- Choose roasted papadam with mint chutney
- Choose fresh fruit for dessert

Heart-Healthy Asian Indian Meal Ideas



1 cup oatmeal with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup non-fat milk **OR** 2 slices of whole-wheat toast with 2 tsp. of almond butter **OR**
2 small idlis with sambar **OR** 1 cup of cracked wheat upma with low-salt tomato or mint chutney –
1 fresh fruit – tea or coffee with non-fat or 1% milk



3 oz. fish or white meat chicken **OR** 1 cup legumes (daal, sambar) – 1 cup of varied curried vegetables –
1 cup shredded carrot/vegetable salad with lemon juice – $\frac{1}{2}$ cup non-fat Greek yogurt –
2/3 cup brown rice **OR** 2 small whole-wheat chapatis – 1 Tbsp. liquid vegetable oil for cooking – 1 fruit
Enjoy a meal similar to lunch for dinner



Snack on unsalted nuts or seeds – fresh vegetables and fruit – $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry puffed wheat cereal with spices

A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle, and support you in your journey to a healthful dietary pattern.

Why Choose a Heart-Healthy Latino-Style Eating Pattern?

A heart-healthy eating pattern will lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. A Latino-style eating pattern that includes foods common to Mexico and Central and South America can be very heart-healthy when it has black and red beans, avocado, colored vegetables like peppers and tomatoes, yams and plantains, grilled lean meats, brown rice, and corn oil or olive oil.



However, some foods used in Latino-style cooking are *less healthy*. These include foods like lard and other solid fats, whole-fat cheese, white rice and white flour tortillas, pork belly and fatty cuts of beef, fried croquetas, empanadas and tostones, and sweets like flan and churros. Eating these unhealthy foods can cause excess body weight, high cholesterol and fats in the blood, diabetes, and high blood pressure, risk factors commonly found in Latinos. The **National Lipid Association** recommends the *heart-healthy tips below* to reduce your risk of heart disease when enjoying Latino-style meals.

Tips for Eating Heart-Healthy Latino-Style Foods

Eat lots of vegetables

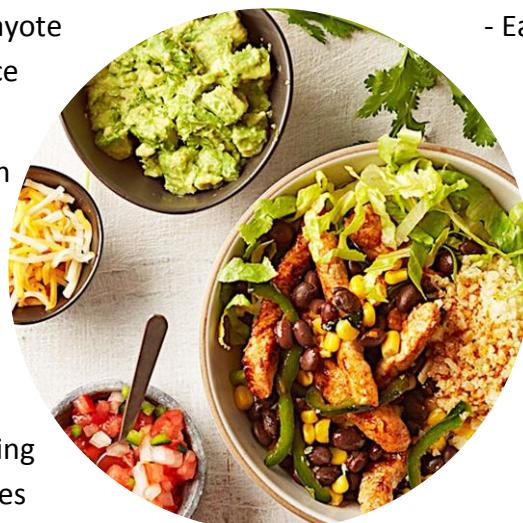
- Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with raw and cooked vegetables
- Eat colorful red, green, and yellow peppers
- Cook squashes like napoles and chayote
- Use spicy sofrito and tomatillo sauce

Eat plant-based or lean protein

- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with lean protein
- Eat more pinto and black beans
- Grill fatty fish like salmon
- Cook skinless chicken breasts
- Cook lean beef and pork

Choose healthy fats

- Avoid using lard and butter in cooking
- Avoid whole milk and full-fat cheeses
- Use more avocado and less cheese in meals
- Snack on raw or unsalted nuts and seeds
- Use canola, corn, extra-virgin olive, and safflower oil



Choose fiber-rich whole grains and tubers

- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your dinner plate with brown rice
- Eat maize, yucca, yams, and plantains
- Eat whole-wheat or corn tortillas
- Choose whole-grain cereals

Choose a variety of fruits

Choose papaya, mangos, bananas and pineapple for snacks and dessert.

Eat low-fat dairy foods

- Drink skim or 1% milk
- Use reduced-fat cheeses
- Try plain soy or rice milk
- Buy low-fat, low sugar yogurt

Use spices for flavor instead of salt

Season dishes with chili peppers, cumin, oregano, cinnamon, and cilantro

Heart-Healthy Latino-Style Meal Ideas



1 egg with refried beans made with canola or olive + corn tortilla + salsa - 1 banana - coffee or tea

3 oz. skinless chicken breast with herbs, spices and onions cooked in corn oil, yucca and fresh papaya

4 oz. grilled fish, non-fried plantains, black beans made with canola oil - ensalada with tomatoes

Snack on almonds, pumpkin seeds, and dried mango mix OR $\frac{1}{4}$ cup guacamole with raw vegetables

A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle, and support you in your journey to a healthful dietary pattern.

Why Should You Eat Omega-3 Fats from Fish for Your Heart Health?

Eating fish and seafood lowers the risk of heart attack and stroke. Fish are *low* in saturated fat and *high* in omega-3 fats. The omega-3 fats, EPA and DHA (short for eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid), may have many heart-health benefits. Oily fish have higher amounts of EPA and DHA than less oily fish. If you have heart disease, you should strive to eat 1000 mg of EPA and DHA a day. If you do not have heart disease, aim for 500 mg of EPA and DHA a day. *Eating fish* is best to increase your intake of EPA and DHA. **Two 4 oz. servings of oily fish per week will increase your blood levels of EPA and DHA.** Avoid deep fried fish. Deep frying may destroy EPA and DHA and adds calories. Limit eating fish high in mercury and other toxins, such as mackerel, swordfish, and some tuna, especially if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Omega-3 Fats in Fish and Seafood

1,000 mg – 1,500 mg EPA and DHA in 3 oz. cooked fish or seafood

- American shad
- Anchovies**
- Herring, Wild
- Mackerel*
- Rainbow Trout, Wild and Farmed
- Sablefish
- Salmon, Canned
- Salmon, Wild (King) and Farmed
- Tuna—Bluefin*

500 mg – 1000 mg EPA and DHA in 3 oz. cooked fish or seafood

- Mussels
- Oysters
- Salmon, Wild (Sockeye, Coho, Chum & Pink)
- Sardines, Canned **
- Smelt
- Swordfish*
- Trout
- Tuna—Albacore*



200 mg – 500 mg EPA and DHA in 3 oz. cooked fish or seafood

- Catfish, Wild
- Crab-King, Dungeness and Snow
- Flounder
- Grouper, Wild
- Ocean Perch
- Pollock
- SeatROUT
- Snapper
- Tuna, canned, in water**

Less than 200 mg EPA and DHA in 3 oz. cooked fish or seafood

- Blue Crab, Wild
- Catfish, Farmed
- Cod, Wild
- Haddock, Wild
- Scallops, Wild
- Shrimp, Wild
- Surimi Product (Imitation Crab)
- Tilapia, Farmed

Ideas for Adding More Fish and Seafood to Your Meals

Eat 4 oz. of grilled, baked, broiled, or sautéed fish at least twice each week

Order simple grilled fish instead of fried fish when eating out

Top a lunch-time salad with canned tuna or salmon**

Snack on a can of sardines** with whole-grain crackers and raw carrots and celery

*Pregnant and breastfeeding women and young children should avoid these fish because they are higher in mercury.

**Canned fish may be high in sodium—look for low sodium varieties.

Tuna packed in water has more omega-3 fats than tuna packed in oil.

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Why Choose a Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern?

The Mediterranean-style eating pattern is one way to eat heart-healthy. It can help you lower your cholesterol levels and triglyceride levels, and improve your blood pressure, which can lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. Research has shown that 30% percent of heart attacks, strokes, and deaths from heart disease can be prevented in high-risk people if they follow a Mediterranean-style eating pattern that has extra-virgin olive oil or unsalted nuts.



The Basics of Mediterranean-Style Eating

A Mediterranean-style eating pattern reflects the diet of people who live near the Mediterranean Sea. Foods that you can include in a Mediterranean-style eating pattern are a variety of fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, fish, and shellfish. Choose chicken and turkey over red meats. Use healthy fats, like olive oil, as your main oil, and eat unsalted nuts and seeds. Limit sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages. If you drink alcohol, have low to moderate amounts and consume with meals.

A Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern

Eat lots of vegetables. Fill at least $\frac{1}{2}$ your plate with a variety of brightly colored vegetables — either steamed, grilled, or raw.



Switch to fiber-rich whole grains. Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with brown and wild rice, barley, bulgur, or quinoa. Choose whole-grain breads and cereals, including oats. Use whole-grain flour in baking instead of white flour.

For dessert, eat fruit. Choose a variety — fresh, dried, and frozen with no added sugar.

Enjoy some dairy products. Add non-fat or low-fat yogurt to meals and snacks. Choose skim or 1% milk. Use only small amounts of low-fat cheese.

Use healthy fats. Use extra-virgin olive oil in cooking and salads. Enjoy an ounce of raw nuts or seeds each day.

Enjoy meatless meals at least one night a week.

On meatless days, build your meals around legumes (beans and lentils) used in casseroles, chili, soups, and salads.

Include seafood at least twice per week. Choose fish high in omega-3 fatty acids like tuna, salmon, and sardines.

Choose smaller portions of meat.

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with skinless chicken or turkey.

Choose only lean cuts of beef and pork. Prepare all meats low in fat by grilling, baking, or broiling. Limit processed meats.

Eating a Mediterranean-Style Diet is Easy.

A sample day may be:

- **Breakfast:** Low-sugar granola topped with plain Greek yogurt, fresh berries, walnuts, and ground flax seeds. Include unsweetened coffee or tea for a beverage.
- **Lunch:** Whole-wheat pita bread with hummus, romaine lettuce, olives, tomatoes with balsamic vinegar and olive oil, and a fresh apple. Choose a calorie-free beverage.
- **Snack:** Raw almonds and seeds, fresh, raw cut-up vegetables.
- **Dinner:** Salmon fillet on a bed of quinoa with olive oil, garlic, lemon, and herbs; a spinach salad with strawberries, pecans, olives, balsamic vinegar, and olive oil. Calorie-free beverage or alcohol, if desired.
- **Dessert:** Cut-up seasonal fresh fruit and serve with plain yogurt.

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey. Talk with an RDN for the answers to your nutrition questions.

Following a heart-healthy eating pattern can help you reach your cholesterol and triglyceride goals and help prevent heart disease.

What You Can Put on a Heart-Healthy Plate

Non-Starchy Vegetables

Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ your plate with colorful, non-starchy vegetables, like asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, collard greens, eggplant, green beans, spinach, and kale.

Lean Protein-Rich Foods

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with lean meat (3 oz. cooked), like fish (especially oily fish); skinless poultry; lean cuts of red meat, like "round" and "loin"; or plant protein foods, like soy (tofu, edamame), dried beans, and lentils.

Heart-Healthy Fats

Add small amounts of foods with healthy fats at meals and snacks, like $\frac{1}{2}$ of an avocado or 1 oz. unsalted nuts or seeds. Cook with liquid vegetable oils, like canola, corn, olive, soybean, safflower oils. Limit unhealthy fats, like butter, lard, coconut oil, and stick margarine.



A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey. Talk with an RDN for the answers to your nutrition questions.

Dairy or Dairy Alternatives

Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy foods, like skim or 1% milk or calcium-fortified milk alternatives, like soy milk with no added sugar.



Fruits

Choose whole fruit instead of juice.

Whole Grains and Starchy Vegetables

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with whole grains (oats, quinoa, fiber-rich whole-wheat bread), starchy vegetables (sweet potatoes, yams, corn, winter squash), or cooked dried beans (kidney, pinto, black beans), green peas, and lentils. Eat at least 3 servings of whole grains each day.

Beverages

Choose water as your main beverage.

Up to 3–4 cups of coffee or tea with no sugar is okay.

Avoid sugar-sweetened drinks, such as soda, lemonade, and sports drinks.

If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation: 1 drink a day for women; 2 a day for men. One drink = a 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1.5 oz. distilled spirit.

Limit Sodium and Salt

Flavor your food with herbs, spices, lemon, and lime juice, and vinegars instead of salt. Read the food label and choose lower-sodium foods.