

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR HEART HEALTH

AHA Scientific Position

Healthy food habits can help you reduce three of the major risk factors for heart attack -- high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and excess body weight. They'll also help reduce your risk of stroke, because heart disease and high blood pressure are major risk factors for stroke. The American Heart Association Eating Plan for Healthy Americans is based on these new dietary guidelines, released in October 2000:

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables. Choose 5 or more servings per day.
- Eat a variety of grain products, including whole grains. Choose 6 or more servings per day.
- Include fat-free and low-fat milk products, fish, legumes (beans), skinless poultry and lean meats.
- Choose fats with 2 grams or less saturated fat per serving, such as liquid and tub margarines, canola oil and olive oil.
- Balance the number of calories you eat with the number you use each day. (To find that number, multiply the number of pounds you weigh now by 15 calories. This represents the average number of calories used in one day if you're moderately active. If you get very little exercise, multiply your weight by 13 instead of 15. Less-active people burn fewer calories.)
- Maintain a level of physical activity that keeps you fit and matches the number of calories you eat. Walk or do other activities for at least 30 minutes on most days. To lose weight, do enough activity to use up more calories than you eat every day.
- Limit your intake of foods high in calories or low in nutrition, including foods like soft drinks and candy that have a lot of sugars.
- Limit foods high in saturated fat, trans fat and/or cholesterol, such as full-fat milk products, fatty meats, tropical oils, partially hydrogenated vegetable oils and egg yolks. Instead choose foods low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol from the first four points above.
- Eat less than 6 grams of salt (sodium chloride) per day (2,400 milligrams of sodium).
- Have no more than one alcoholic drink per day if you're a woman and no more than two if you're a man. "One drink" means it has no more than 1/2 ounce of pure alcohol. Examples of one drink are 12 oz. of beer, 4 oz. of wine, 1-1/2 oz. of 80-proof spirits or 1 oz. of 100-proof spirits.

Following this eating plan will help you achieve and maintain a healthy eating pattern. The benefits of that include a healthy body weight, a desirable blood cholesterol level and a normal blood pressure. Every meal doesn't have to meet all the guidelines. It's important to apply the guidelines to your overall eating pattern over at least several days.

These guidelines may do more than improve your heart health. They may reduce your risk for other chronic health problems, including type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis (bone loss) and some forms of cancer.

What about people with heart disease or related conditions?

The chart below shows the recommended levels of total fat, saturated fat and dietary cholesterol for two groups of people.

	Total Fat	Saturated Fat	Cholesterol
People without coronary heart disease, diabetes or high LDL cholesterol	Less than 30% of total calories	Less than 10% of total calories	Less than 300 mg per day
People with coronary heart disease, diabetes or high LDL cholesterol	Less than 30% of total calories	Less than 7% of total calories	Less than 200 mg per day

Some people misinterpret the total fat guideline to mean that each food or each recipe should have less than 30 percent of its calories come from fat. **The guideline applies to total calories eaten over several days, such as a week.**

What are recommended amounts of total fat and saturated fat in grams?

Calorie Level	Total Fat Less Than 30% (grams)	Saturated Fat Less Than 60% (grams)	Saturated Fat Less Than 70% (grams)
1200	less than 40	less than 13	less than 9
1500	less than 50	less than 17	less than 12
1800	less than 60	less than 20	less than 14
2000	less than 67	less than 22	less than 16
2200	less than 73	less than 24	less than 17
2500	less than 83	less than 28	less than 19
3000	less than 100	less than 33	less than 23