

Your Care Instructions

A heart-healthy diet has lots of vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans and whole grains, and is low in salt. It limits foods that are high in saturated fat, such as meats, cheeses and fried foods. It may be hard to change your diet, but even small changes can lower your risk of heart attack and heart disease.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Watch your portions

- Learn what a serving is. A "serving" and a "portion" are not always the same thing. Make sure that you are not eating larger portions than are recommended. For example, a serving of pasta is ½ cup. A serving size of meat is about 75 grams. A 75-gram serving is about the size of a deck of cards. Measure serving sizes until you are good at "eyeballing" them. Keep in mind that restaurants often serve portions that are two or three times the size of one serving.
- To keep your energy level up and keep you from feeling hungry, eat often but in smaller portions.
- Eat only the number of calories you need to stay at a healthy weight. If you need to lose weight, eat fewer calories than your body burns (through exercise and other physical activity).

Eat more fruits and vegetables

- Eat a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. Dark green, deep orange, red, or yellow fruits and vegetables are especially good for you. Examples include spinach, carrots, peaches, and berries.
- Keep carrots, celery, and other veggies handy for snacks. Buy fruit that is in season and store it where you can see it so that you will be tempted to eat it.
- Cook dishes that have a lot of veggies in them, such as stir-fries and soups.

Limit saturated and trans fat

- Read food labels and try to avoid saturated and trans fats. They increase your risk of heart disease. Trans fat is found in many processed foods such as cookies and crackers.
- Use olive or canola oil when you cook. Try cholesterol-lowering spreads, such as Becel.
- Bake, broil, grill, or steam foods instead of frying them.

- Choose lean meats instead of high-fat meats such as hot dogs and sausages. Cut off all visible fat when you prepare meat.
- Eat fish, skinless poultry and meat alternatives such as soy products instead of high-fat meats. Soy products, such as tofu, may be especially good for your heart.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

Eat fish

- Eat at least two servings of fish a week. Certain fish, such as salmon and tuna, contain omega-3 fatty acids, which may help reduce your risk of heart attack.

Eat foods high in fiber

- Eat a variety of grain products every day. Include whole-grain foods that have lots of fiber and nutrients. Examples of whole-grain foods include oats, whole wheat bread and brown rice.
- Buy whole-grain breads and cereals, instead of white bread or pastries.

Limit salt and sodium

- Limit how much salt and sodium you eat to help lower your blood pressure.
- Taste food before you salt it. Add only a little salt when you think you need it. With time, your taste buds will adjust to less salt.
- Eat fewer snack items, fast foods and other high-salt, processed foods. Check food labels for the amount of sodium in packaged foods.
- Choose low-sodium versions of canned goods (such as soups, vegetables and beans).

Limit sugar

- Limit drinks and foods with added sugar. These include candy, desserts and soda pop.

Limit alcohol

- Limit alcohol to no more than three drinks a day for men and two drinks a day for women. Too much alcohol can cause health problems.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor or nurse call line if:

- You would like help planning heart-healthy meals.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

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