

Heart Healthy Diet

For heart failure, the most important diet change is reducing sodium intake. But other foods can cause heart problems as well. Foods high in cholesterol and certain fats can clog arteries. This could result in a heart attack or stroke. Cutting down on these foods will help protect your heart. Not everyone with heart failure needs to eat this way. If you are to make changes like these, it should be a part of your heart failure management plan, and your doctor should have discussed it with you.

Pick Fats Wisely

Your body needs fat to stay healthy. There are different types of fats, some that are good for you and others that are not. Try to avoid those that are bad.

	Pick	Limit	Stay Away
Type of Fat	Unsaturated Fat	Saturated Fat	Trans Fat
Where it's found	Nuts, seeds, fish, avocados, some vegetable oils such as olive, canola and soy	Animal foods such as beef, pork, or high-fat dairy	Snack foods, fast foods, shortening, most margarines
What to do	Eat unsaturated fats some of the time. Cook with olive oil instead of butter, for example.	Limit saturated fats as much as you can. Choose fat free milk and lean meats, fish, or chicken.	Avoid all foods with trans fats. Read your food labels to see what type are in the food. Any label that lists hydrogenated oils should be avoided.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fatlike substance. Your body needs some cholesterol but too much can block your arteries and cause heart problems. Cholesterol is absorbed into your blood from foods such as egg yolks, organ meats, and fatty animal products. Limiting these can help you lower your cholesterol in your blood and your heart attack risk.

Tips for When You Cook

- Bake, steam, or broil foods instead of frying
- Cook with olive oil, canola oil, or trans-fat-free margarine instead of butter or normal margarine
- Trim fat from meat and remove skin from chicken
- When making chili or stews, skim off layer of fat before reheating
- Reduce serving size
- Read your labels for sodium, cholesterol, and fat information

Weight management will decrease the work on your heart. Work with your doctor to set a weight range. Many of the things you do to manage your weight will help decrease your risk for heart disease.