

Be smart Eat smart

QUICK GUIDE



EATING FOR A HEALTHY HEART



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
HEART FOUNDATION



Why Eat Healthy?

A healthy diet can help protect your heart and prevent you from developing heart disease. A balanced diet can help you lose or maintain weight, reduce your risk of diabetes and high blood pressure.

What you eat and drink impacts several heart disease risk factors, including:

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Weight
- Diabetes risk/control

A heart healthy diet should include a wide variety of unprocessed and fresh foods, including plenty of fruit and vegetables (at least five portions every day), whole grains, nuts and foods low in saturated fats, sugars and salt. Be wary of processed foods, which often contain high levels of salt.



What to Eat for a Healthy Heart

Healthy eating starts with healthy food choices and a well balanced diet. You should include:

Fruit and vegetables

A well-balanced diet should include at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. They can be fresh, frozen, dried or tinned (choose no/low sodium options).

Whole Grains

Foods with whole grains have fibre, protein and nutrients to help you stay healthy and fuller longer. Some common whole grain foods include: whole wheat, corn, oatmeal.

Protein

Protein is vital to your brain and heart. It is found in animal products like fish, poultry, meat and dairy, as well as nuts, legumes and some grains. Try to eat at least two servings of fish each week, choose lean meats and use beans regularly in your diet.

Healthy fats and oils

A small amount of fat is good for you. The type of fat is just as important for health as the total amount of fat. You should choose healthier unsaturated fats which tend to be more liquid (like canola oil), nuts, low-fat or nonfat dairy.



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Foods to Limit or Avoid

Processed or Ultra-processed foods

Some processed and most ultra-processed food and drink products contain little or no whole food. They are ready-to-consume or ready-to heat, and thus require little or no culinary preparation.

Sugar

Sugars are not harmful in small amounts. Added sugars however, provide no nutrients and add extra calories that we don't need. Added sugars include natural sugars like white or brown sugar, honey, or others, like high fructose corn syrup.

Salt

Eating too much salt can increase the risk of developing high blood pressure. Most of the salt in our diets comes from packaged, processed foods. Check food labels for the salt content and go for lower sodium options.

Saturated and trans fats

Too much saturated fat can increase your risk of heart disease. Saturated fats are found in animal-based foods like beef, pork, poultry, full-fat dairy products. Trans fats are found most commonly in foods containing partially hydrogenated oils. Saturated and trans fats, tend to be more solid at room temperature (like butter).

Alcohol

Reduce your long-term health risks by drinking no more than:

- 2 standard drinks a day **for women** and no more than 10 standard drinks a week
- 3 standard drinks a day **for men** and no more than 15 standard drinks a week



Healthy Eating Recommendations

Cook and eat at home:

When you prepare your own meals, you have more control over ingredients and preparation methods.

Don't use salt during cooking and remove the salt from your table. Use seasonings (herbs and spices) instead to enhance the natural flavor of food.

Watch your calories:

You may need fewer or more calories depending on several factors including age, gender, and level of physical activity.

To maintain a healthy weight, you should only eat as many calories you use through physical activity. If you want to lose weight, take in fewer calories (eat less) or burn more calories (move more).

Pay attention to how food is prepared:

Use healthier cooking methods that add little or no solid fat and need less salt (if any), like roasting, grilling, baking or steaming. Frying can add a lot of extra calories and unhealthy fats.

Eat reasonable portions:

Often this is less than you are served, especially when eating out. It can be very easy to over serve, and therefore overeat. Put any extra food away, save leftovers for another meal.

Serving size examples:

- 1 slice of bread
- ½ cup rice or pasta (cooked)
- 1 small piece of fruit
- ¾ cup fruit juice
- ¼ cup cheese



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Reading the Nutrition Facts Label

Reading the nutrition facts label can help you make healthier choices, but it can be hard to make sense of all those numbers. Here's a quick guide to help you navigate the grocery aisles and decipher food labels.

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	120
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 5g	6%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 40g	15%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Total Sugars 10g	
Includes 5g Added Sugars	10%
Protein 3g	6%
Vitamin D 1.8mcg	8%
Calcium 130mg	10%
Iron 1.08mg	6%
Potassium 940mg	20%
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

The first things listed are the size of a single serving and how many servings are in the package.



Calculate how many calories you're getting if you eat the whole package.



Choose foods lower in saturated and trans fats.



The amount of sodium and cholesterol is listed. Limit these to protect your heart.



Total Sugars includes sugars naturally present, as well as any added sugars that may be present in the product. Watch out for added sugars, as they add calories but no nutrients.



Get enough vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber. Aim for high percentages.



	Quantity	✓
Canned Fruit/Vegetables (low/no sodium) (natural juice/water)		
Corn		

	Quantity	✓
Whole Grains		
Oatmeal		
Wheat Bread		
Cereal		

	Quantity	✓
Herbs/Spices and Oils		
Vegetable oil		

	Quantity	✓
Canned Meat & Seafood		
Sardines		
Tuna		

	Quantity	✓
Dairy (Low-fat/Fat-free)		

	Quantity	✓
Miscellaneous		



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Trinidad and Tobago Heart Foundation (TTHF) non-profit, non-governmental foundation whose principal objective is advocating for the prevention of Cardiovascular Disease, creating awareness of heart health, healthy lifestyles and proper dietary habits in an effort to reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke.

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