

# Guidelines for healthy eating



**A**dvice about "healthy eating" is everywhere, but what exactly does that mean? When you're filling up your grocery cart or preparing dinner, what foods should you choose? Having a list of guidelines can help you pick foods that will fight heart disease.

per day should consume less than 16 grams of saturated fat, less than 2 grams of trans fat and between 50 and 70 grams of total fat. Limit cholesterol to no more than 300 milligrams each day.

- Limit the amount of added sugars you eat. A good guideline: No more than 100 calories from sugar each day for women (about six teaspoons/day), 150 calories for men (about nine teaspoons/day).
  - Aim to keep your sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams or less each day to keep your blood pressure in check. Limit processed meats like cold cuts, sausage and hot dogs to fewer than two servings a week.
  - Try to eat four servings of nuts, legumes and beans each week.
  - Consume alcohol in moderation—one drink per day for women, one to two for men.
  - When eating out, pay attention to portion sizes and calorie counts.
- By following these guidelines, you'll have "healthy eating" in the bag!



The AHA's Heart Healthy Diet Recommendations include the following, based on a 2,000-calorie per day diet:

- Balance the number of calories you eat with physical activity to maintain a healthy weight. Don't eat more calories than you need.
- Try to eat 9 to 10 servings, or 4½ cups, of fruits and vegetables every day. They're high in fiber, vitamins and minerals and low in calories.
- Choose whole grains and high-fiber foods, and try to eat three 1-ounce servings every day. Fiber can help you feel full longer so you don't give in to cravings!
- Twice a week, make it a point to eat fish like salmon or albacore tuna to get healthy omega-3 fatty acids in your diet.
- Choose lean meats, select fat-free (skim), 1 percent or low-fat dairy products and avoid hydrogenated fats like margarine, shortening, cooking oils and foods made with them. A good guideline: A person needing 2,000 calories

## Life's Simple 7 in a Nutshell

Cardiovascular health encompasses two basic components: ideal health behaviors and ideal health factors.

The behaviors include not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, meeting or exceeding AHA recommendations for physical activity and eating a healthy diet.

The health factors include blood pressure, fasting blood glucose and total cholesterol levels that are within the AHA's recommended range—preferably without needing medication to keep them there.

Modest lifestyle or behavioral changes can move you in the right direction. And those who make behavioral changes before developing any serious health risks can look forward to a better quality of life and moving toward excellent heart health.