

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Take care of your heart with better nutrition

February is Heart Month – a great time to make changes to reduce your risk of heart disease. An easy place to start is with the foods you eat. Here are a few suggestions.

Eat lots of vegetables and fruit

Choose different kinds of vegetables and fruit every day. Challenge yourself to fill half your plate with vegetables or fruit at each meal.

Choose high-fibre foods

Eat foods higher in fibre, such as whole grains, beans, peas, lentils, vegetables, and fruit. Soluble fibre is a type of fibre that can help lower cholesterol. Find it in cereals with psyllium, oat bran, oatmeal, canned beans and lentils, barley, ground flax, Brussels sprouts, apples, strawberries and citrus fruit.

Eat fish at least two times each week

Eat fish high in omega-3 fats: salmon, sardines, herring, mackerel, trout, and tuna. Choose fresh, frozen, or no salt added canned fish.

Use heart-healthy fats every day

Use small amounts of healthy fats such as those found in the foods below (up to two to three Tbsp or 30–45 mL every day).

- Olive, canola, peanut, sunflower oils
- Chia seeds, hemp seeds, or ground flaxseeds can be added to yogurt or hot cereal
- Nuts such as walnuts, almonds, pecans, or pistachios

Limit saturated fats

- Choose lower-fat dairy products, skim or one-per cent milk and lean meats to reduce the saturated fats from animal foods. Choose plant-based foods with little to no saturated fat, such as fortified soy beverage, peas, beans, and lentils, and tofu.

Choose and prepare foods with little or no added salt (sodium)

- Limit foods such as crackers, snack foods like chips and pretzels, deli meats, canned and dry soups, sauces, pickled foods, and condiments.

Reduce food and drinks with added sugar

- Reduce sugar and sweets such as honey, molasses, brown and white sugar, syrups, candies, chocolates, and sweet desserts such as pastries and ice cream.
- Limit drinks with added sugar, such as regular pop, sweetened teas and coffees, and fruit-flavoured drinks.

Start with making small changes. They all add up to help make your heart healthy.