Building a Heart-Healthy Plate
Advice from the National Lipid Association Clinician’s Lifestyle Modification Toolbox

Following a heart-healthy eating pattern can help you reach your cholesterol and triglyceride goals and help prevent heart disease.

What You Can Put on a Heart-Healthy Plate

Non-Starchy Vegetables
Fill ½ your plate with colorful, non-starchy vegetables, like asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, collard greens, eggplant, green beans, spinach, and kale.

Lean Protein-Rich Foods
Fill ⅛ of your plate with lean meat (3 oz. cooked), like fish (especially oily fish); skinless poultry; lean cuts of red meat, like “round” and “loin”; or plant protein foods, like soy (tofu, edamame), dried beans, and lentils.

Heart-Healthy Fats
Add small amounts of foods with healthy fats at meals and snacks, like ⅕ of an avocado or 1 oz. unsalted nuts or seeds. Cook with liquid vegetable oils, like canola, corn, olive, soybean, safflower oils. Limit unhealthy fats, like butter, lard, coconut oil, and stick margarine.

Dairy or Dairy Alternatives
Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy foods, like skim or 1% milk or calcium-fortified milk alternatives, like soy milk with no added sugar.

Fruits
Choose whole fruit instead of juice.

Whole Grains and Starchy Vegetables
Fill ¼ of your plate with whole grains (oats, quinoa, fiber-rich whole-wheat bread), starchy vegetables (sweet potatoes, yams, corn, winter squash), or cooked dried beans (kidney, pinto, black beans), green peas, and lentils. Eat at least 3 servings of whole grains each day.

Beverages
Choose water as your main beverage. Up to 3–4 cups of coffee or tea with no sugar is okay. Avoid sugar-sweetened drinks, such as soda, lemonade, and sports drinks. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation: 1 drink a day for women; 2 a day for men. One drink = a 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1.5 oz. distilled spirit.

Limit Sodium and Salt
Flavor your food with herbs, spices, lemon, and lime juice, and vinegars instead of salt. Read the food label and choose lower-sodium foods.

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey. Talk with an RDN for the answers to your nutrition questions.

This information is provided as part of the Clinician’s Lifestyle Modification Toolbox courtesy of the National Lipid Association.