



Heart-Healthy Eating – Plant-Based Style

Advice from the National Lipid Association Clinician's Lifestyle Modification Toolbox

Why should you eat heart-healthy?

Eating heart-healthy foods will lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. It can lower your cholesterol and triglycerides. Eating heart-healthy can help manage other risk factors like blood pressure and blood sugar. One heart-healthy eating pattern you can follow is a plant-based eating pattern. It is also called a **vegetarian** or **vegan** eating pattern.

Heart-Healthy Eating – Plant-Based Style

Choose colorful vegetables

Fill ½ your plate with colorful non-starchy vegetables

- Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, and green beans
- Orange, red, and yellow peppers
- Dark greens like arugula, kale, or spinach
- Avoid deep fried veggies

Choose plant-based protein foods

Use in recipes in place of meat

- Dried beans – kidney, pinto, and black beans
- Lentils and split peas
- Soy foods – edamame, tempeh, tofu and textured soy protein



Choose foods with healthy fats and oils

Many plant foods have healthy fats – use in small amounts

- Liquid oils - canola, corn, olive, safflower, and sunflower
- Avocados and olive
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Nut butters - almond and peanut butter
- Avoid coconut oil

Avoid processed foods

- Read food labels of prepared plant-based foods – some are high in unhealthy fats
- Refined grains like white breads, rice and pastas



Choose high-fiber whole grain foods and starchy vegetables

Fill ¼ of your plate with high-fiber foods

- Barley, bulgur, and oats
- Brown or wild rice and quinoa
- 100% whole-wheat breads and pastas
- White or sweet potatoes, yams, winter squash
- Beans, lentils, and split peas
- (have protein, too)

Choose fruit with no added sugar

Make fruit your dessert

- Fresh or dried fruits
- Frozen or canned fruit with no added sugar
- Limit 100% juice to ½ cup a day

Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy foods or dairy-free options

- Calcium-fortified soy, oat, or nut milks with no added sugar
- Use soy yogurt and cheese

Drinks and sweets

Choose mostly water

- Avoid drinks and foods with added sugar like sodas, cookies, desserts, candies, ice cream, table sugar

Limit sodium (salt)

Flavor your food with herbs, spices, citrus juices, and vinegars



- Read the % Daily Value of sodium on the Nutrition Facts labels on your food

Eating the plant-based style can be easy! Here is a vegan menu idea:

Breakfast: Oatmeal with berries and 1 tbl sliced almonds, soymilk with no added sugar, coffee or tea with no sugar, or water

Lunch: Baked tofu in a whole-wheat wrap with leafy greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, and mustard; navy bean soup; fresh orange

Snacks: ¼ cup unsalted nuts or seeds and raw vegetables

Dinner: Pumpkin and black bean chili, whole-grain roll, a pear, and soymilk with no added sugar, or water

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle.