Heart-Healthy Eating DASH Style
Advice from the National Lipid Association Clinician’s Lifestyle Modification Toolbox

Why Follow a Heart-Healthy Eating Pattern?
A heart-healthy eating pattern can help you reduce your cholesterol and triglycerides. It includes eating a variety of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains; low-fat (1%) or fat-free dairy products; lean protein foods; fatty fish at least twice a week; vegetable oils and other foods rich in healthy fats; and less sweets, sugar-sweetened beverages, and fatty red meats. One heart-healthy eating pattern is the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH). This eating pattern is:

- High in fiber
- High in calcium, potassium, and magnesium
- Low in saturated fat and trans fat
- Low in added sugars
- Limiting sodium to 1,500 mg – 2,300 mg each day

Tips for Heart-Healthy Eating Using the DASH Pattern*

Eat up to 6 servings of grains a day; choose at least 3 servings of fiber-rich whole grains like 1 slice whole grain bread, 1 c. whole grain ready-to-eat cereal, ½ c. cooked brown rice, quinoa, or whole grain pasta.

Choose 2 – 3 servings a day of low-fat or fat-free dairy foods like skim or 1% milk, yogurt, and reduced-fat cheeses, or dairy alternatives like fortified soy or rice milk.

Use healthy fats like vegetable oils (canola, corn, olive, safflower, soybean or sunflower) in place of coconut oil. Use avocado, nut butters (almond, peanut), and soft margarines in place of butter. Eat 1 oz. of unsalted nuts or seeds 3 – 4 times each week as snacks or with meals.

Avoid foods with trans fat. Don’t buy foods with the words “partially hydrogenated oil” on the ingredient list.

Limit sodium (salt) to 1,500 – 2,300 mg a day. Flavor your food with herbs, spices, citrus juices, and vinegars instead of salt. Read the food label and choose lower sodium foods.

Eat 3-4 cups of colorful vegetables a day like raw or cooked vegetables; leafy salad greens served with an oil and vinegar dressing; or low-sodium vegetable juice.

Eat up to 2 cups of fruits a day like fresh fruit, or frozen or canned fruit without added sugar. Limit 100% juice to ½ cup a day and avoid sugary drinks.

Choose up to 6 oz. of lean animal protein foods a day like skinless poultry, lean cuts of red meat like “round” and “loin,” and oily fish twice a week.

Eat at least 1 cup of plant-based protein foods each week like soy (tofu, edamame) or legumes (kidney, pinto, black beans, and lentils) in place of lean animal protein.

Limit your cholesterol intake to <200 mg per day. Limit egg yolks to 2 – 4 a week; avoid organ meats like liver and gizzards, fatty red meats, butter, and full-fat dairy products.

Prepare foods by baking, grilling, broiling, stir-frying, boiling, steaming, or poaching.

*The number of servings listed are based on 1,600 calories. You many need more or less calories each day.

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 a 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.