

*South Asians are people from India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.*

## Why Follow a Heart-Healthy Eating Pattern?

A **heart-healthy eating pattern** will lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. South Asians are at a higher risk of heart disease. Risk factors such as high triglyceride levels, high LDL cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol levels, a large waist, high blood pressure, and diabetes can be improved by following a heart-healthy eating pattern and physical activity. A South-Asian (Indian) -style eating pattern may be heart-healthy because it has many plant-based foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lentils (dal) and legumes, unsalted nuts, and non-tropical vegetable oils. If you choose to eat animal products, choose lean protein foods and non-fat or low-fat dairy foods. Limit or avoid foods that are *not* heart-healthy like refined carbohydrates (white rice, white flour), sugary drinks, desserts, salt, and solid fats. Limit traditional Indian foods cooked in ghee, vanaspati, palm oil, coconut oil and coconut products.

## Tips for Eating Heart-Healthy South Asian Style

### Select whole grains

Choose brown rice or 100% whole-wheat flour or ragi (pearl millet) flour. Add ground oatmeal or soy flour or amaranth flour to your flour.

### Choose plant-based protein

Tofu is a good source of high-quality protein. Use tofu in place of paneer. Lentils (dal) or legumes (beans) e.g. chickpeas and black-eyed beans are also good choices.

### Eat foods low in saturated and *trans* fats

Avoid ghee, vanaspati, butter, cream, palm oil and coconut oil in food preparation and in processed foods. For a creamy texture, use pureed almonds (nut butters) or non-fat yogurt.



### Mind Your Portions


Select rice or chapatis or potatoes as the starchy food filling ¼ of your plate.


Fill ½ your plate with leafy green vegetables and other vegetables like okra and broccoli. Prepare food in a small amount of non-tropical oil (e.g. olive, canola, or soybean.)

### Enjoy healthful foods when dining out


Choose fish and chicken entrees cooked in a tandoor. Ask for foods to be made with unsaturated oils like canola and olive and naan to be made without butter. Avoid food made with added cream or butter (makhani), coconut oil, and fried foods. Choose appetizers cooked in a tandoor, fruit chaat, and roasted papadam served with mint chutney.

## Heart-Healthy South Asian Meal Ideas

 1 cup oatmeal with ½ cup non-fat milk **OR** 2 slices of whole-wheat toast with 2 tsp. of almond butter **OR** 2 steamed idlis with sambar **OR** 1 cup of cracked wheat upma with tomato or mint chutney; 1 fresh fruit; tea or coffee with non-fat or 1% milk

 3 oz. fish or chicken **OR** 1 cup legumes (daal, sambar); 1 cup vegetable curry; 1 cup shredded carrot/vegetable salad with lemon juice; ½ cup non-fat plain yogurt for lassi or raita; 2/3 cup cooked brown rice or 2 small whole-wheat chapatis; 1 TBSP oil (canola, olive, sunflower, or soy bean oil for cooking); 1 serving fresh fruit

Enjoy a meal similar to lunch for dinner

 Unsalted almonds or seeds; fresh vegetables; fresh fruit; ½ cup dry cereal mix (made with puffed rice, puffed wheat flavored with herbs and spices of your choice)

**A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your journey to a healthful dietary pattern.**