

# Eating well with high blood pressure

## Where to start

Did you know that poor diet is a leading cause of coronary heart disease? Healthy eating is not about “good” and “bad” foods or restrictive diets. It’s about making small changes that you can continue long term.

**The 5 key parts of a heart healthy eating pattern are to eat:**

-  **1. Plenty of vegetables, fruits and wholegrains**
-  **2. A variety of healthy protein sources especially fish and seafood, legumes (such as beans and lentils), nuts and seeds. Smaller amounts of eggs and lean poultry can be included in a heart healthy diet. If choosing red meat, make sure the meat is lean and limit to 1-3 times a week.**
-  **3. Unflavoured milk, yoghurt and cheese. Those with high blood cholesterol should choose reduced fat varieties**
-  **4. Healthy fat choices with nuts, seeds, avocados, olives and their oils for cooking**
-  **5. Herbs and spices to flavour foods, instead of adding salt**

This style of eating is naturally low in unhealthy fats, salt and added sugar and rich in wholegrains, fibre, vitamins and healthy fats. Eating this way can help reduce your chances of getting heart disease in the future.

## Ditch the Salt

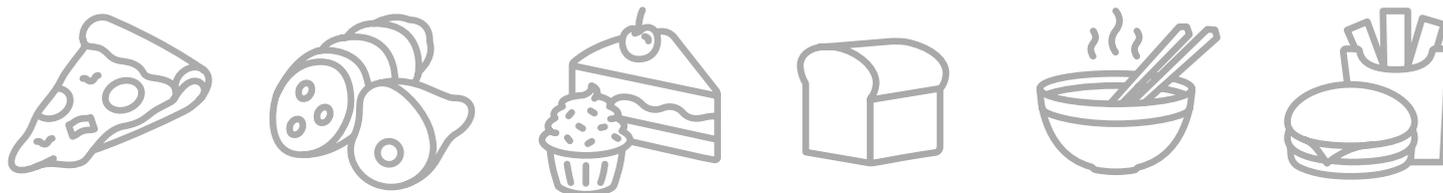
Eating too much salt can cause high blood pressure and increase your risk of a heart attack. Excess salt is also linked to kidney problems, stroke and osteoporosis.

Many Australians eat nearly double the recommended amount of salt each day.

Most (around three quarters) of the salt we eat comes from processed foods like biscuits, muffins, cakes, pizza, burgers, pasta and noodle dishes, breads and processed meats such as ham and sausages.

Limit these foods in your diet and replace them with fresh and less processed foods.

Read food labels and choose products with less than **400mg sodium per 100g**. The best choices are products with less than **120mg sodium/100g**.



## Cooking at home

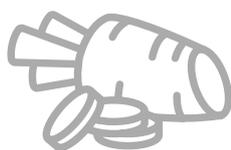
Take away and processed foods are often high in salt. Cooking at home is a great way to reduce the salt you eat.

Use herbs and spices to add extra flavour to your cooking instead of adding salt. Try some of the flavour combinations below.

MAIN INGREDIENT	FLAVOUR COMBINATIONS
Fish	Lemon, pepper, dill, shallots
Beans and legumes	Paprika, chilli, rosemary
Chicken	Thyme, pepper, lemon, lemongrass
Eggs	Chives, pepper, parsley
Lamb	Mint, rosemary
Pork	Nutmeg, cinnamon
Tomato	Basil, paprika, oregano
Potato	Chives, pepper, parsley, thyme
Green vegetables	Mint, chives, pepper, lemon juice
Orange vegetables	Cumin, nutmeg, ground coriander, tahini
Salad vegetables	Parsley, coriander, basil, pepper, mixed nuts and seeds

### Top 5 tips

1. Aim for 5 servings of vegetables a day. Add vegetables to salads, soups and casseroles or try them as a snack.
2. Replace highly processed cheeses (such as cream cheeses, cheese spreads and cheese sticks) with small portions of lower salt cheeses such as cottage cheese, mozzarella and edam. If you have high cholesterol, try to choose low fat milk, yoghurt and cheese.
3. Use only small amounts of reduced salt sauces and flavorings such as soy sauce. Products with 120mg sodium/100g or less are low in salt. You'll find many low salt and reduced salt products available in stores so compare products and choose the lower salt options.
4. Swap processed foods such as pies, pastries, biscuits, sauces, soups and snacks for fresh foods. Try some of the tasty Heart Foundation recipes: [heartfoundation.org.au/recipes](http://heartfoundation.org.au/recipes)
5. Allow time for your taste buds to adapt to a lower salt intake. Using lots of herbs and spices to flavor food can help. Salt substitutes can still contain high amounts of sodium and are not recommended.



## Heart healthy changes I can make now

Making small changes daily adds up over time. It can be helpful to focus on **2 or 3 changes at a time**. Take note below on the changes you are going to start with.

**1:** .....

**2:** .....

**3:** .....

### For more information

- For more information on healthy eating visit [heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating](http://heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating)
- To find a walking group near you visit [walking.heartfoundation.org.au](http://walking.heartfoundation.org.au)
- For recipes [heartfoundation.org.au/recipes](http://heartfoundation.org.au/recipes)
- To speak to a health professional, call the **Heart Foundation Helpline** on **13 11 12**
- To find a dietitian in your area visit [daa.asn.au](http://daa.asn.au)

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