






# Eating well to protect your heart

## 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.

## Cook at home more

Meals and snacks purchased outside of the home are often high in kilojoules, salt, added sugar and unhealthy fats. Control what’s in your meals by cooking at home more often.

- Use take-aways and restaurant meals as occasional treats only (once a week or less)
- Take lunch from home
- Go to [heartfoundation.org.au/recipes](https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/recipes) for recipes, weekly meal plans, tips and shopping lists to make your life easier.

## Dinner ideas

Planning ahead and using leftovers in interesting ways can help make lunch and dinner meals easier.

- Try chopping baked vegetables from yesterday’s roast and adding to some pasta or rice together with some canned cannellini beans and chilli flakes.
- Baked vegetables like pumpkin, zucchini and capsicum can be added to sandwiches, wraps and salads

## Smart snacking

The snacks you choose make a difference so make them count. Heart healthy snacks include:

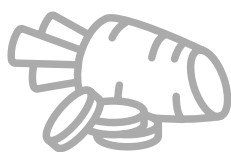
- a piece of fruit with unflavoured yoghurt
- wholegrain crackers with cheese
- a small handful of unsalted nuts and seeds
- vegetable sticks with a healthy dip or nut butter
- choose water as a drink

## Easy food swaps

SWAP THIS	FOR THIS
Potato crisps	Unsalted nuts and seeds Air popped popcorn – try adding spices or chilli flakes instead of salt and butter
Hot chips	Home-made sweet potato wedges (toss wedges of sweet potato with olive oil and bake @180C for 20-30 minutes)
Sweet biscuits and cakes	Home-made versions (see recipes at <a href="http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/recipes/category/baking">www.heartfoundation.org.au/recipes/category/baking</a> )
Fruit yoghurt or ice cream	Natural yoghurt with added fresh or frozen berries
Ham sandwich	Cheese and salad sandwich on wholemeal bread
Meat pie	Chicken and salad wrap
Cream cheese, cheese spread, cheese sticks	Mozzarella, edam, cheddar, cottage and swiss cheese
Salt	Herbs, spices, pepper, garlic, chilli or ginger
Soft drinks, fruit juice or cordial	Water, mineral water or sparkling water – try adding lemon, lime or orange slices to flavour the water without sugar
Butter, palm oil, coconut oil, lard	Olive oil, peanut oil, sunflower oil, margarine

## 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. Go for grain. Replace white bread and rice with wholegrain and seeded bread, brown rice and high fibre breakfast cereals.
3. Eat more legumes like lentils, chickpeas and beans. Use dried and cooked or canned varieties either alone or add to dishes to reduce the amount of meat.
4. Aim for 2-3 servings of fish a week. Canned fish in spring water or olive oil can be used; just avoid those canned in brine.
5. Try introducing at least one meat-free day a week. You can find lots of quick and tasty meat-free recipes at [heartfoundation.org.au/recipes](http://heartfoundation.org.au/recipes)



 **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)
- 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)
- To find a walking group near you visit [walking.heartfoundation.org.au](http://walking.heartfoundation.org.au)

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