

Enjoy Heart-Healthy Foods

What's the best way to share the love this Valentine's Day? A healthy heart. The month of February is not just for sweet treats and hugs—it's also dedicated to raising awareness of the leading cause of death in America: heart disease. The key to heart health is eating foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sodium, and high in omega-3 fatty acids and fiber. Eating a well-balanced diet will include a combination of whole grains, lean proteins, fruits and vegetables and low-fat dairy. Saturated and trans fats are found in some meats, dairy products, baked goods and deep-fried and processed foods. Both types of fat raise your LDL—or "bad"—cholesterol level. Instead, eat more plant proteins, fish, poultry, lean meats and low-fat dairy foods. Start cooking with oils high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat instead of butter, margarine or shortening, which are high in trans fat.

Hearth Healthy Ideas:

- Switch refined grains, like white rice or bread, with whole-grain options, such as brown rice and 100-percent whole-grain bread or pasta. Throughout the day, sip on water and limit sugary beverages by choosing fat-free milk and 100-percent fruit juices.
- Next time you are at the grocery store, pick up some of these heart-healthy items: Beans, peas and barley, soybeans, other soy-based foods, fruits and vegetables, salmon, tuna, sardines and mackerel, red grapes and purple grape juice and nuts like almonds, walnuts, pecans and hazelnuts
- Another way to reduce your risk of heart disease is to be active. Regular, moderate physical activity lowers blood pressure and helps your body control stress and weight. Be physically active in your own way, and start by doing what you can, at least 10 minutes at a time. Children and teens should get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day, and adults should get two hours and 30 minutes per week. Encourage your family to take a walk after dinner or play a game of catch or basketball.
- For more heart-healthy recipes go to: <http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>

Resources: www.kidseatright.org Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services