

Ask The Dietitian

Answers To Common Healthy Eating Questions

(NAPSA)—Here's a healthy eating Q and A that should be easy to digest. The answers were supplied by nutritionists at the American Heart Association.

Q. My goal this spring is to eat healthier. What do you recommend?

A. Making a series of small, specific changes is the best method. The American Heart Association suggests eating a moderate amount of a variety of foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol to help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke—the number one and three killers in this country.

- Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables—they're naturally low in saturated fat and cholesterol;

- Look for whole-grain products including oatmeal, rice and whole-grain breads;

- Use low-fat or no-fat dairy products;

- Choose lower-fat protein such as skinless poultry, fish, legumes and lean meat (six ounces a day total).

Q. I try to watch what I eat, but reading food labels in the grocery store is confusing and time consuming. What can I do to make finding heart-healthy choices easier?

A. The American Heart Association created its distinctive red and white heart-check mark to help consumers quickly and reliably find healthy foods throughout the grocery store. Every product bearing the heart-check mark meets the American Heart Association's Food Certification Program's nutritional criteria and can be part of a heart-healthy meal plan.

Q. I tend to make nutritious meals—but I fall off the healthy-eating wagon when it comes to snacking. How can I satisfy a snack attack and still



In their eyes, you're a superhero. Be a lifesaver by looking for the heart-check mark when shopping for your family's favorite heart-healthy foods.

eat healthy?

A. Most traditional snacks, like cookies and chips, are high in fat and empty calories, with little nutritional value. Try low-fat, low-cholesterol snacks instead, such as baked tortilla chips and salsa; fruit and low-fat yogurt dip; fresh vegetables and low- or no-fat dressing or dip; or low-fat graham crackers or low-fat angel food cake with berries.

Q. I'm frustrated by the weight I've gained over the past few years. How can I lose it for good?

A. Make sure the amount of calories you eat is less than the number you burn each day. Read labels and measure portions to see how many calories you are consuming. Getting physically active for 30 minutes each day can help you use more calories, lose weight and build heart health long term.

Q. Where can I learn more about heart-healthy eating?

A. For a list of certified foods and to build your heart-healthy grocery shopping list, visit www.heartcheckmark.org.