



# Food For Thought

TIPS ON TASTE NUTRITION & HEALTH



## Ask The Dietitian

(NAPSA)—*Answers From The American Heart Association To Common Heart-Healthy Eating Questions.*

**Q:** My goal is to eat healthier. What do you recommend?

**A:** Making small, specific changes is the best method. The American Heart Association suggests eating a moderate amount of a wide variety of foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. This plan can 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, which are naturally low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Remember that frozen fruit or fruit canned in its own juice can supplement what is available in the produce department. Low-salt canned and frozen vegetables can also be quick, easy and heart-healthy if you avoid varieties with added butter and high-fat sauces.

- Look for whole grain products including oatmeal, rice and whole grain breads. Read the label to be sure you're buying whole grains;

- Use low-fat or no-fat dairy products on a daily basis. Try low-fat or no-fat cottage cheese, yogurt, cheeses and milk for a wide variety of tastes. Be sure to read labels to check the fat content;

- Choose lower-fat protein sources such as skinless poultry, fish, legumes and lean meat. Limit the amount to four ounces of meat or poultry in a meal—about the size of a deck of cards (no more than six ounces a day, total).

**Q:** I am trying to watch what I eat when it comes to fat and cholesterol, but reading food labels in the grocery store is confusing and time consuming. What can I do to make finding heart-healthy choices quicker?

**A:** The American Heart Association has a vivid red and white heart-check mark to help consumers quickly and reliably find foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Shoppers can be assured that every product bearing the heart-check mark meets the American Heart Association Food Certification Program's nutritional criteria and can be part of a heart-healthy meal plan. These items are not only low in saturated fat and cholesterol, they



also include at least 10 percent of the Daily Value per reference amount of at least one of six nutrients: protein, dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium or iron.

**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 eat healthy?

**A:** Most traditional snacks, like cookies and chips, are high in fat and “empty calories,” meaning they provide little nutritional value. Try to substitute low-fat, low-cholesterol snacks for those traditional high-fat snacks. Try baked tortilla chips and salsa or fruit and low-fat yogurt dip. Fresh vegetables and low- or no-fat dressing or dips are also a good choice. Got a sweet tooth? Try low-fat angel food cake with berries or a few low-fat graham crackers. Look for snacks bearing the American Heart Association heart-check mark.

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

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

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

**A:** To learn more about reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke through nutrition, visit the American Heart Association Web site at [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org) or call 1-800-AHA-USA1 for a free copy of the “Shop Smart with Heart” brochure.