

Heart-Healthy Eating: Shopping Tips

Client Name _____ Date _____

Dietitian / Dietetic Technician _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Shop for foods that do not have a lot of added ingredients, such as salt, fats, or sugar. Learn your goals for fat, calories, and sodium. Then use food labels to help you make choices that keep you on target. For example:

- If you are on an eating plan that limits sodium, choose foods with less than 300 mg of sodium per serving.
- Choose foods with very little or no saturated fat or trans fat.

Remember: Not everything that is advertised or labeled as healthy is really good for you!

Fruits and Vegetables

Start with fresh fruits and vegetables. These do not have added fats, sugar, or sodium.

When you buy frozen or canned produce, read labels:

- Look for types that do not have anything added to the fruits or vegetables, such as sauces, gravies, or seasonings.
- Canned vegetables may be high in sodium. However, you can enjoy many lower-sodium or salt-free varieties.

Breads, Cereals, and Grains

Choose breads and cereals that are made from whole grains and high in fiber:

- Look for products with whole grains (such as whole wheat, rye, or oats) as the first ingredient.
- Breads with at least 2 grams (g) of fiber per serving are good choices.
- Select cereals that contain at least 5g fiber per serving.
- Limit cereals that list added sugars on the label.
- Check the label for the amount of sodium if you are on a reduced-sodium plan.

Milk and Dairy

When choosing milk or dairy products, pick nonfat or low-fat types:

- Choose nonfat (skim), ½%-fat, or 1%-fat milk.
- Look for tasty cheeses that are low in saturated fat and sodium. Choose them more often than regular cheese.



This handout may be duplicated for client education.

Meats and Other Protein Foods

You can get protein from poultry, fish, beef, pork, dried beans, soy products, and other vegetable proteins.

- When choosing chicken or other poultry, look for breast or white meat without the skin
- When choosing beef and veal, pick cuts without much marbling (fat). Healthy types include round steak, tenderloin, and sirloin tips.
- Lean center cuts are the best cuts of pork and lamb.
- You can buy any type of fresh fish that you enjoy. Do not always choose the same kind because some types may contain mercury or other contaminants that you don't want to eat in large amounts.
- Canned fish (such as tuna) can be high in sodium. Choose low-sodium brands.
- Add vegetarian entrees and vegetable protein foods, like beans, veggie burgers, or tofu. Look for products that are low in saturated fat and sodium and high in fiber.

Other Foods

- Convenience foods, such as canned soups, pasta sauces, and prepackaged or frozen dinner entrees and side dishes can be high in sodium and/or fat. Read labels and choose carefully.
- There are many snack foods that you can enjoy:
 - Nuts, seeds, and pretzels make good snacks. Avoid those with added salt.
 - Keep your sodium and saturated fat limits in mind while you shop.
 - Look for snacks that are free of trans fat. If the ingredients include hydrogenated oil, then the food has trans fat
- It's okay to have desserts once in a while if you choose wisely:
 - Fresh fruit and nonfat or low-fat frozen yogurt are good choices.
 - There are many kinds of reduced-fat and fat-free candies, cakes, cookies, pastries, and frozen desserts. They may fit within your limits for fat and sodium. However, many fat-free or low-fat desserts are high in calories and low in healthy nutrients. Have them only occasionally.

For More Information

For more shopping tips, visit the American Heart Association's Delicious Decisions Web page (<http://www.deliciousdecisions.org>).