

Smart Choices

A Community Nutrition
Education Program



Healthy Heart



Give Your Heart a Break

Quick Facts...

- The major types of fat in food are saturated fats and trans fats, monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats.
- Dietary cholesterol is a fat-like substance found only in animal foods.
- Eating too much saturated fat and trans fat in food can raise blood cholesterol levels and increase heart disease risk.
- Eating monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats in place of saturated fat and trans fat can help lower blood cholesterol levels and decrease heart disease risk.
- High blood cholesterol (over 200) is a risk for heart disease.
- HDL, nicknamed “good” cholesterol, should be 40 or above. Above 60 is believed to be protective.

To help with food choices, remember:

- Cholesterol is only in animal products.
- Saturated fats are found mostly in animal fats and tropical vegetable oils such as coconut, palm kernel and palm oil.
- Trans fats may be found in margarine, shortenings, baked or fried goods, dairy products, beef and lamb.
- Vegetables, fruits, cereal grains and starches contain no cholesterol and little or no fat.
- Vegetable oils, such as corn, sunflower, soybean, canola or olive oils, contain mostly polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fatty acids.

Three ways to lower blood cholesterol:

- Eat foods that contain less saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.
- Be physically active – at least 30 minutes of moderate activity.
- Maintain a healthy weight; if you are overweight, lose weight.

Tips for cutting down on fat and cholesterol:

- Keep fat intake at 20%–35% of calories a day, about 44-78 grams for a 2,000 calorie diet.
- Choose more vegetables, fruits, whole-grain breads and cereals, dried beans and peas.
- Use skim or 1% milk.
- Serve 2- to 3-ounce servings of lean meat.
- Trim fat from meats before cooking, or drain after cooking.
- Remove skin from chicken before serving.
- Use cooking methods other than frying. Broiling, baking, steaming or stir-frying are good choices.
- Eat less sausage, bacon and processed luncheon meats.
- Read labels on foods for fat content.
- Cut down on fat-rich spreads, sauces, dressings, gravies, butter and margarine.
- Eat fish two times a week to get heart-healthy fat.

STIR-FRY RICE AND VEGETABLES*

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 medium sweet potato, thinly sliced**
- 1 small bell pepper, cut in strips
- 2 carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 yellow squash, thinly sliced
- 1 cup chopped broccoli
- 2 cups cooked brown rice***
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/4 cup low sodium soy sauce



- * Any combination of vegetables can be used.
- ** Peel and cut in half lengthwise before slicing.
- *** White rice may be substituted for brown rice, but brown rice is higher in fiber.

Heat oil in heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Stir-fry vegetables until barely tender. Add rice. Cook quickly until heated through. Combine honey and soy sauce in cup. Pour over mixture and stir. Serve immediately. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Each serving has 168 calories, 4 gm protein, 33 gm carbohydrates, 3 gm fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 1161 RE vitamin A, 36 UG folate, 43 mg vitamin C and 425 mg sodium.

Add a cold glass of skim milk, a whole-wheat roll and a piece of fruit to complete this meal.

Reference: American Heart Association

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