

**Healthy Habits for Life**  
From the American Heart Association's  
Choose To Move Program

Healthy food habits can help reduce three of the major risk factors for heart attack — high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and excess body weight. They'll also help reduce the risk of stroke, because heart disease and high blood pressure are major risk factors for stroke.

As women **"Choose To Move<sup>SM</sup>"** with the American Heart Association, eating healthfully will help them stay strong and energized — able to integrate more physical activity into their everyday activities.

Following are some basic dietary and lifestyle guidelines from American Heart Association. When taking these to heart for 12 weeks on the Choose To Move program, many women find they have established healthy habits that they can follow for the rest of their lives.

**Achieve an overall healthy eating pattern.**

- Choose an overall balanced diet with foods from all major food groups, emphasizing fruits, vegetables and grains.
- Consume a variety of fruits, vegetables and grain products — at least 5 daily servings of fruits and vegetables, and at least 6 daily servings of grain products, including whole grains.
- Include fat-free and low-fat dairy products, fish, legumes, poultry and lean meats — eat at least two servings of fish per week.
- Choose healthy snacks, such as a handful of almonds, a small carton of low-fat yogurt or a homemade snack mix made with salt-free seasoning blend. Almonds, for example, are high in vitamin E and magnesium and a good source of protein and fiber, and yogurt is high in calcium.

**Achieve a healthy physical activity pattern.**

- Engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. Moderate physical activity includes brisk walking, gardening, swimming, bicycle riding and housework.

**Achieve a healthy body weight.**

- Maintain a level of physical activity that achieves fitness and balances energy expenditure with caloric intake. To lose weight, you must use up more energy than you take in.
- Make your food choices count by focusing on foods that provide a variety of nutrients, healthy unsaturated fats and limited added sugar.

**Achieve a desirable cholesterol level.**

- Limit foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol. Substitute with grains and monounsaturated fat from vegetables, fish, legumes and nuts, such as almonds. In a recent study published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*, almonds significantly lowered bad cholesterol levels in a study of people with high cholesterol.
- Limit your cholesterol intake to 300 milligrams (mg) a day. If you have heart disease or risk factors, limit it to 200 mg a day.
- Limit *trans* fatty acids. These are found in foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils such as packaged cookies, crackers and other baked goods; commercially prepared fried foods and some margarines.

**Achieve a desirable blood pressure level.**

- Take salt off the table and cook without salt to help significantly reduce overall salt consumption. Instead, replace your salt shaker with a flavorful salt-free seasoning blend. Limit salt intake to no more than 6 grams (2,300 mg sodium) per day, slightly more than one teaspoon a day.
- For those who drink, limit alcohol consumption to no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men.