



Sensible choices good for heart health

What are the best foods to eat to combat heart disease?

Unfortunately, there are no magic foods to prevent this No. 1 killer. But following a basic, healthful diet can help. The American Heart Association advises consuming only as many calories as you need; eating lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains; as well as:

- Make meat choices to limit saturated fat. With red meat and pork, look for cuts of “loin” and “round” — they are usually the most lean. With poultry, choose white meat more often than dark. Remove visible fat from any meat before cooking, and remove skin from poultry before eating.

- Limit saturated fat when choosing dairy products, too, by selecting fat-free, 1 percent fat and low-fat varieties. You don't have to say “never” to whole-fat dairy such as butter, whole milk and full-fat cheese, but limit portions and frequency.

- Reduce trans fats by cutting back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Use olive oil, liquid margarine or soft margarine on bread instead of hard margarine. Limit baked goods, crackers and French fries made with partially hydrogenated or saturated fats. Be careful — a food can claim “zero” trans fat if it contains less than a half-gram per serving. If the food has “shortening” or “partially hydrogenated fat” in the ingredients listing, it likely has some trans fat.

The AHA, along with many other recognized authorities, also recommends consuming less than

300 milligrams of cholesterol a day. You should know, though, that this guidance has fallen under scrutiny. It seems that for many people, the link is weak between cholesterol in food and cholesterol in blood. For example, eggs — which have little fat but a whopping 200 milligrams of cholesterol per yolk — are beginning to regain their good name.

The University of Connecticut reported at the 2006 Experimental Biology conference that consuming eggs did increase blood cholesterol — both the “bad” low-density lipoproteins (LDLs) and the “good” high-density lipoproteins (HDLs). But in those who ate three or more eggs a day, both LDL and HDL particles in the bloodstream were much larger than those in other people. That's significant, because larger LDLs are less likely to damage the arteries, and larger HDLs are better at clearing cholesterol from the bloodstream. Still, the science behind dietary cholesterol recommendations remains under investigation. If you want to be cautious — as your question indicates you do — limit dietary cholesterol.

For more details on eating for a healthy heart, see the AHA's Web site at <http://www.americanheart.org>. Click on “Healthy Lifestyle” and choose “Diet and Nutrition.”

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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Editor:
**February is American
Heart Month.**

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