

## Why Follow a Heart-Healthy Eating Pattern?

A heart-healthy eating pattern can help you reduce your cholesterol and triglycerides. It includes eating a variety of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains; low-fat (1%) or fat-free dairy products; lean protein foods; fatty fish at least twice a week; vegetable oils and other foods rich in healthy fats; and less sweets, sugar-sweetened beverages, and fatty red meats. One heart-healthy eating pattern is the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH). **This eating pattern is:**

- High in fiber
- High in calcium, potassium, and magnesium
- Low in saturated fat and *trans* fat
- Low in added sugars
- Limiting sodium to 1,500 mg – 2,300 mg each day

## Tips for Heart-Healthy Eating Using the DASH Pattern\*

**Eat up to 6 servings of grains a day; choose at least 3 servings of fiber-rich whole grains** like 1 slice whole grain bread, 1 c. whole grain ready-to-eat cereal, ½ c. cooked brown rice, quinoa, or whole grain pasta.

**Choose 2 – 3 servings a day of low-fat or fat-free dairy foods** like skim or 1% milk, yogurt, and reduced-fat cheeses, or dairy alternatives like fortified soy or rice milk.

**Use healthy fats** like vegetable oils (canola, corn, olive, safflower, soybean or sunflower) in place of coconut oil. Use avocado, nut butters (almond, peanut), and soft margarines in place of butter. Eat 1 oz. of unsalted nuts or seeds 3 – 4 times each week as snacks or with meals.

**Avoid foods with *trans* fat.** Don't buy foods with the words "partially hydrogenated oil" on the ingredient list.

**Limit sodium (salt) to 1,500 – 2,300 mg a day.**

Flavor your food with herbs, spices, citrus juices, and vinegars instead of salt. Read the food label and choose lower sodium foods.

\*The number of servings listed are based on 1,600 calories. You may need more or less calories each day.

**A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey. Talk with a RDN for the answers to your nutrition questions.**

**Eat 3-4 cups of colorful vegetables a day** like raw or cooked vegetables; leafy salad greens served with an oil and vinegar dressing; or low-sodium vegetable juice.

**Eat up to 2 cups of fruits a day** like fresh fruit, or frozen or canned fruit without added sugar. Limit 100% juice to ½ cup a day and **avoid sugary drinks.**

**Choose up to 6 oz. of lean animal protein foods a day** like skinless poultry, lean cuts of red meat like "round" and "loin," and oily fish twice a week.

**Eat at least 1 cup of plant-based protein foods each week** like soy (tofu, edamame) or legumes (kidney, pinto, black beans, and lentils) in place of lean animal protein.

**Limit your cholesterol intake to <200 mg per day.**

Limit **egg yolks to 2 – 4 a week**; avoid **organ meats** like liver and gizzards, **fatty red meats, butter, and full-fat dairy products.**

**Prepare foods** by baking, grilling, broiling, stir-frying, boiling, steaming, or poaching.

