

Healthy Heart Tip #1

As we shared in the Kick-Off Quiz answers, most restaurant choices still give us more calories, sodium and fat than we really need. It is wise to take a good look at the nutrient breakdown before you visit a restaurant or fast food outlet. Most have their nutrition information online. Check it out for yourself and go prepared with the best information.

Healthy Heart Tip #2

To lower your cholesterol, eat beans!

In a new study in the *Journal of Nutrition*, healthy people who ate a half-cup cooked pinto beans daily lowered their cholesterol by 8% over 12 weeks, compared to those eating chicken soup (the "control" food). Previous studies have shown that navy and garbanzo beans, among others, have similar cholesterol-lowering effect.

Healthy Heart Tip #3

Two new studies have confirmed that whole grains help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. One, an analysis of seven large studies, concluded that people who average 2.5 daily servings of whole grains were about 20% less likely to have heart disease or a stroke than those consuming little or no whole grains. The second study, from Germany, found that those who consumed the most fiber from grains (primarily whole grains) as well as magnesium (in whole grains, beans, leafy greens and nuts) were 23 to 33% less likely to develop Type 2 diabetes.

Healthy Heart Tip #4

Corn oil can now carry an FDA-approved "qualified" health claim that it may reduce the risk of heart disease, since its unsaturated fats help lower total and LDL ("bad") cholesterol. The FDA approved a similar claim for canola oil in 2006 and olive oil in 2005. About one tablespoon of corn oil a day may reduce the risk when it replaces a similar amount of saturated fat, without increasing total calories eaten that day.

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