# Choose a Heart-healthy diet

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Due to the prevalence of the disease, February is recognized as American Heart Month to spread awareness of heart disease and prevention. Your diet directly impacts your heart health, so it's important to understand which foods can increase—or lower—your risk for heart disease.

Here are some tips on maintaining a heart-healthy diet:

Control your portions.
Keep track of the serving size of your foods by using measuring cups or a scale. A smaller plate or bowl can help you avoid overloading your plate.
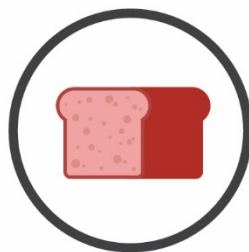
Select whole grains.
Whole grains are not only a great source of fiber, but they can also help regulate your blood pressure. One way to increase whole grains in your diet is by swapping out white bread or egg noodles for whole-grain bread and pasta.
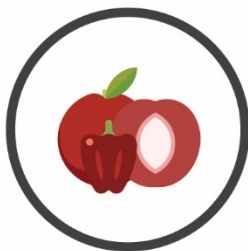
Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.
Both fruits and vegetables are great sources of vitamins and minerals and are low in calories. Eating more of these can help you cut back on higher-calorie foods.
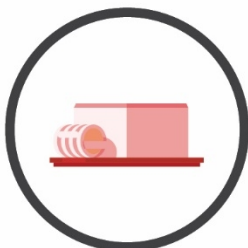
Limit unhealthy fats.
Saturated and trans fats can increase your cholesterol and ultimately increase your risk of coronary artery disease. When cooking, use less butter and margarine. Instead, incorporate heart-healthy fats like salmon, avocados and nuts.

Choose low-fat protein sources.
Lean meats, fish, poultry and eggs are among the best protein sources for a heart-healthy diet. Choose low-fat options like skinless chicken instead of fried chicken or fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can help lower your triglycerides.