

# Nutrition & Heart Health

Nutritious eating is good for health, but **fiber** and **healthy fats** are especially important for your heart.

**Fiber** can help reduce cholesterol, blood pressure and inflammation which are all important for maintaining your heart's health. There are two types of fiber, and both are good and good for you.

- **Soluble fiber** dissolves in water to form a gel-like material. It can help lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels, plus it helps with blood pressure and inflammation.
  - Soluble fiber is found in oats, peas, beans, apples, citrus fruits, carrots, barley and psyllium.
- **Insoluble fiber** promotes the movement of material through your digestive system and increases stool bulk, so it can be of benefit to those who struggle with constipation or irregular stools.
  - Whole-wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts, beans and vegetables, such as cauliflower, green beans and potatoes, are good sources of insoluble fiber.

**Fats.** Eating healthy fats and avoiding saturated and trans fats can help your heart, too.

- **Unsaturated fats** – like the ones that are liquid at room temperature – are found in olive, canola, corn and other cooking oils. They can also be found in avocados.
- **Omega 3 fats** are unsaturated fats that are found in fish, flax and other seeds, nuts, and nut butters. These help with inflammation and are good to include in the diet.
  - The American Heart Association recommends eating 2 servings of fish per week. A serving is 3 ounces cooked, or about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of flaked fish. Fatty fish like anchovies, herring, mackerel, black cod, salmon, sardines, bluefin tuna, whitefish, and striped bass are high in omega-3 fatty acids.
- **Fats to avoid** such as saturated and trans fats contribute to high cholesterol levels in the blood. Consider minimizing saturated and trans fats in the diet.
  - Saturated fats are found mostly in animal products containing fat.
  - Trans fats are found in processed foods, although most companies have eliminated them.



**QUESTIONS?**  
Call Beth McKinney, Registered Dietitian  
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