



TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEART THROUGH FOOD: AMAZING HEART HEALTHY FOODS TO ADD TO YOUR DIET NOW!

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February is American Heart Month! Did you know that cardiovascular disease is the #1 killer of men and women? According to the CDC, 1 person will die every 37 seconds. And don't think this is just an old person's disease. It can happen at pretty much any age! That's why you should start thinking about protecting your heart and taking action NOW!

The American Heart Association estimates that approximately 80% of cardiovascular disease cases are preventable. This is great news!! You can start taking care of your heart by adding delicious heart-healthy foods to your diet.

AMAZING HEART-HEALTHY FOODS

Veggies

Veggies of all kinds are fantastic! Eating a rainbow of veggie colors each day ensures that you get a range of vitamins, minerals, and heart-healthy phytonutrients. They all have slightly different functions and benefits! The one thing they all have in common though is fiber!! Fiber and heart health go hand-in-hand. Women need at least 25 grams per day and men are looking at 38 grams.

Add-it ideas:

- Veggie breakfast scramble
- Veggie dippers with hummus
- Salad-less entree salads
- Spinach, zucchini, or cauliflower added to smoothies
- Roasted veggies

Seafood

Eating fish high in omega-3 fatty acids may decrease inflammation, decreased risk of stroke, lower blood pressure, and decrease triglycerides, just to name a few potential benefits! Aim to eat at least 2 (4-ounce) servings of fish per week. Options high in these healthy unsaturated fats are salmon, sardines, mackerel, lake trout, herring, and canned light tuna.

Add-it ideas

- Salmon or tuna cakes made with canned fish
- Nicoise style salad with sardines
- Roasted salmon with za'atar spice blend (dried thyme, sesame seeds, and sumac), lemon, and olive oil
- Broiled mackerel filets with chopped fresh herbs, olive oil, and lemon
- Roasted lake trout with cherry tomatoes and garlic

Herbs and Spices

Dried or fresh, it's all good! Herbs and spices are packed with anti-inflammatory antioxidants! Rosemary, oregano, turmeric, and cinnamon are particularly potent! Herbs and spices are also great flavor enhancers to add so you can reduce the amount of salt thrown into the dish. Smoked paprika is fantastic for this purpose!

Add-it ideas

- Throw some smoked paprika into your taco seasoning
- Marinate chicken with dried Italian herbs and balsamic vinegar
- Top protein, pasta, and veggies with basil pesto
- Mix ground cinnamon into overnight oats/oatmeal and smoothies
- Marinate tofu cubes with dried herbs, lemon, and olive oil, then bake until crispy

Healthy Plant Oils

My favorite heart-healthy unsaturated oils are avocado, extra virgin olive, and cold-pressed canola oil. That's not say you can't ever eat butter, but most of the time, make sure you're using unsaturated plant oils. Finishing oils such as sesame, hemp, and walnut oil are great for adding flavor at the end of cooking. While not an oil, don't forget whole avocados! They're loaded with nutrients and heart healthy fat.

Add-it ideas

- Sear fish with avocado oil
- Make salad dressing with extra virgin olive oil, Dijon mustard, lemon, and garlic
- Add flax seed oil to a smoothie
- Avocado toast with a drizzle of hemp seed oil
- Drizzle sesame oil over steamed veggies

Pulses

Pulses include beans, chickpeas, lentils, and dried peas and they are all fantastic. Not only are they super affordable, but they are rich sources of plant-based protein and fiber! Pulses have a kind of fiber called soluble fiber, which is a good tool in your cholesterol-lowering arsenal. They're also quite filling and contribute to satiety.

Add-it ideas

- Canned pinto beans mashed with garlic powder and olive oil to make healthy refried beans
- Lentil salad with chopped herbs and feta
- Split pea soup
- Slow cooker ground turkey and mixed bean chili
- Hummus

Whole Grains

Carbohydrates aren't the enemy! Especially, when you're eating whole grains packed with fiber! Some options include quinoa, brown rice, oats, wheat berries, rye berries, kamut, whole wheat pasta, popcorn, and, whole wheat bread. Oats are particularly helpful in lowering the bad (LDL) cholesterol through limiting the amount of cholesterol the body absorbs.

Add-it ideas

- Garlicky steamed quinoa with chopped chives
- Breakfast "fried" brown rice
- Wheat berry pilaf
- Overnight oats
- Pasta salad made with whole wheat pasta

Nuts, Peanuts, and Seeds

Nuts and seeds are full of those heart-healthy, unsaturated fats, but they also contain fiber and antioxidants. Almonds, pistachios, walnuts, and pecans are great for cooking and snacking on. Walnuts flax, chia, and hemp seeds are even sources of the plant-based version of omega-3s.

Add-it ideas

- Mix chia seeds into overnight oats
- Make trail mix with whole almonds, dried apricots, and popcorn
- Add walnuts to steamed quinoa
- Use peanut or almond butter to make energy bites
- Peanut butter with apple slices

Berries

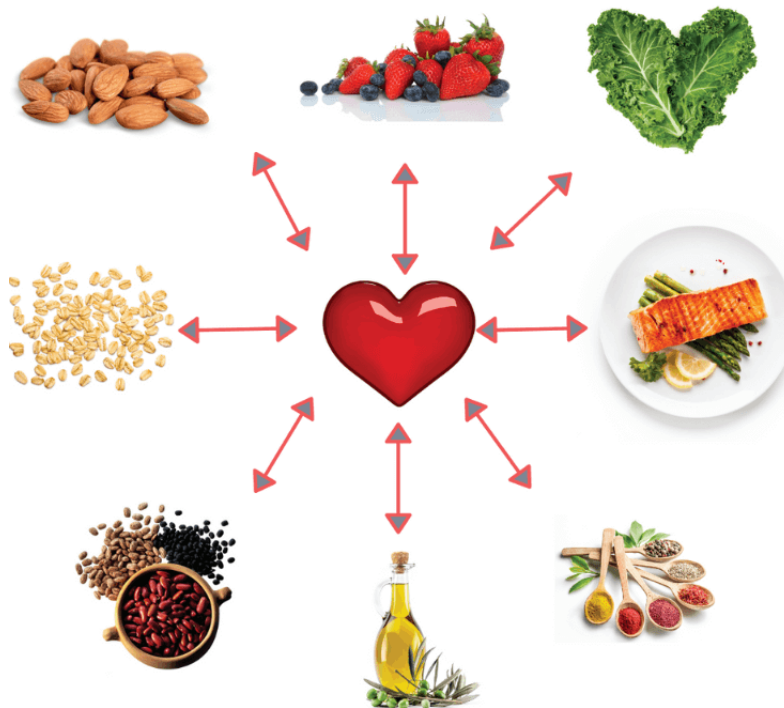
All types of fruits have benefits, but berries of all kinds, including blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, and raspberries are particularly healthy because of the anti-inflammatory polyphenols. These health-promoting compounds may help to lower blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels.

Add-it ideas

- Eat berries plain as a snack
- Add to yogurt, smoothies, cottage cheese, oatmeal/overnight oats
- Add to salads
- Add frozen & defrosted smashed raspberries to sparkling water and fresh mint

Love Your Heart Through Food

8 Amazing Heart Healthy Foods



TastyBalanceNutrition.com