

## Why Follow a Heart-Healthy Eating Pattern?

A **heart-healthy eating pattern** will lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. It may lower your cholesterol and triglycerides, and your blood pressure and blood sugar. Try to eat more heart-healthy foods like vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, low-fat or non-fat dairy foods, lean protein foods, fatty fish, beans and legumes, raw or unsalted nuts, and liquid vegetable oils. Limit or avoid foods that are *not* heart-healthy like sweets, sugary drinks, refined grains, fatty or processed meats, and solids fats.

The good news is that eating healthfully does not have to cost a lot of money!

### Tips for heart-healthy eating on a budget

- Plan weekly menus and make your grocery list from these menus
- Limit packaged and pre-cooked foods—many are high in salt, fat, and sugar.
- Check for store specials and coupons in newspapers and online.
- Shop at discount grocery stores and buy non-perishable items in bulk.
- Buy generic or store brands.
- Eat *before* going grocery shopping to avoid impulse buying.
- Check out [www.choosemyplate.gov/budget](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget) for more ideas!



## Tips for Low Cost Heart-Healthy Eating

### Grains

- Limit grains to ¼ of a 9-inch plate
- Choose brown rice and whole-wheat pasta
- Choose whole grain bread and cereals
- Buy smaller amounts to prevent spoilage

### Protein Foods

- Cook meals with plant proteins (beans, legumes, lentils) more often
- Limit meat portions to ¼ of a 9-inch plate or about 3 ounces
- Use water-packed, low-salt canned fish
- Choose lean meats like chicken or turkey (take off the skin)
- Limit red meat and choose lean cuts when you do buy it (round or sirloin and lean ground beef)
- Buy value packs of lean meats and freeze what you don't use



### Fruits and Vegetables

- Fill ½ of a 9-inch plate with non-starchy vegetables
- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables 'in season'
- Buy canned, no-added-salt beans and vegetables
- Buy plain frozen fruit and vegetables

### Dairy Foods

- Buy store-brand low-fat dairy foods
- Buy plain yogurt in large containers
- Add fruit and nuts to plain yogurt
- Use non-fat dried milk

### Condiments and Snacks

- Use 1 – 2 Tbsp. oil and vinegar on salads
- Snack on raw or unsalted nuts
- Make unsalted air-popped popcorn
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks
- Carry a reusable bottle to fill with water

## Budget Friendly Heart-Healthy Menu Ideas

Low-Sugar Cereal or Oatmeal + Fruit or Raisins **OR** Whole-Grain Toast + 2 Tbsp. Peanut Butter + 1% Milk

Tuna-Vegetable Wrap with Low-Fat Yogurt **OR** 2 Tbsp. Peanut Butter on Whole-Wheat Bread  
**OR** Red Beans and Brown Rice + Carrot Sticks or Side Salad + Fresh Fruit + Water or 1% Milk

Meatless Bean Chili **OR** Lentil Soup **OR** Pasta and Beans **OR** Chicken-Fish with Brown Rice  
+ Salad or Green Vegetable + Fresh Fruit + Water or 1% Milk

**Snacks** Homemade Popcorn **OR** Veggies + Hummus **OR** Low-Fat Yogurt + Seasonal Fresh Fruit

**A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle, and support you in your journey to a healthful dietary pattern.**

This information is part of the [Clinician's Lifestyle Modification Toolbox](#) courtesy of the National Lipid Association.