

HS-A Cardio-Protective dietary information in preventing Cardiovascular Disease-CVD

A Mediterranean or similar diet is recommended by professional Cardiology bodies as the first line diet to preventing Cardiovascular disease. It can be used in primary or secondary prevention and in conjunction with specific dietary advice related to individually relevant risk factors (diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, overweight). Caloric intake is recommended to be balanced by energy expenditure (physical activity). A diet low in cholesterol and saturated fat with a focus on wholegrain products, vegetables, fruit, and fish is recommended.

Mediterranean-type of diet

- Recommended to consume a Mediterranean-type diet [1-3]. This is a cardio-protective eating plan based on all the classic foods and beverages that were consumed in the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea in the 1960s.
- The Mediterranean-type of diet is high in unsaturated fats (e.g. olive oil, nuts, seeds), low in saturated fats (e.g. red meat, full fat dairy) and overall contains more fresh than processed food items (e.g. fruit, vegetables, whole grains).

Dietary Fat & Cholesterol

- Saturated fat (e.g. found in red-meat, cheese, full fat dairy) increases the total and LDL-cholesterol, a major CVD risk factor.
- Trans-fat (e.g. found in fried and baked goods) increases the total and LDL-cholesterol, as well as lowering the beneficial HDL cholesterol.
- Changing the type of fat in our diet (replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats) may reduce the risk of CVD [4]. Unsaturated fats are found in olive oil, nuts, seeds, and oily fish.
- Eating foods that naturally contain cholesterol (e.g. eggs, shellfish, organ meats) have less impact on blood cholesterol levels than eating foods that are high in saturated fat.

Dietary Fibre

- Dietary fibre (e.g. found in fruit, vegetables, legumes, wholegrain foods) helps to reduce the risk of CVD [5]. It regulates the blood sugar levels and helps to lower total and LDL cholesterol levels.

Salt

- Excess salt is associated with increased blood pressure levels. The recommended intake is less than 5 g of salt per day. A small reduction in salt intake of 1 g per day can lead to a significant reduction in blood pressure [6]

Soft Drinks & Alcoholic Drinks

- Regular consumption of sugar-sweetened soft drinks is associated with excess weight, the metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes, all of which are risk factors for CVD.



- Excess alcohol intake is associated with increased blood pressure and body weight, major risk factors for CVD.

Plant Sterols-are naturally occurring part of all plants and found in vegetables, nuts, legumes & grains

- Functional foods containing sterols/stanols can be used to lower LDL cholesterol levels by 10% on average, when taken in the correct daily dose (2 g/day) [7].

Tips for a Heart Healthy Diet

Replace saturated fat with unsaturated fat

- Replace red meat with oily fish such as mackerel, trout, sardines, or salmon.
- Replace butter with olive oil or canola oil.
- Replace unhealthy snacks such as biscuits with a handful of unsalted nuts.

Reduce intake of trans-fats

- Read food labels and avoid foods containing hydrogenated oils.
- Limit intake of biscuits, pies, cakes, and fried foods.

Increase fibre intake

- Aim for minimum of 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day. 1 serving = 1 medium piece of fruit (e.g. apple, orange), 2 small pieces of fruit (e.g. plums, kiwis), ½ cup of cooked vegetables, a bowl of salad.
- Base your meals on vegetables, salad, and fruit. Add salad vegetables to sandwiches.
- Choose fruit and raw vegetables as healthy snacks.

Reduce salt intake

- Replace salt with healthier alternatives like fresh and dried herbs, spices, black pepper, chilli and lemon.
- Remove the salt cellar from the table.
- Choose fresh foods instead of processed and canned foods.

Limit alcohol intake

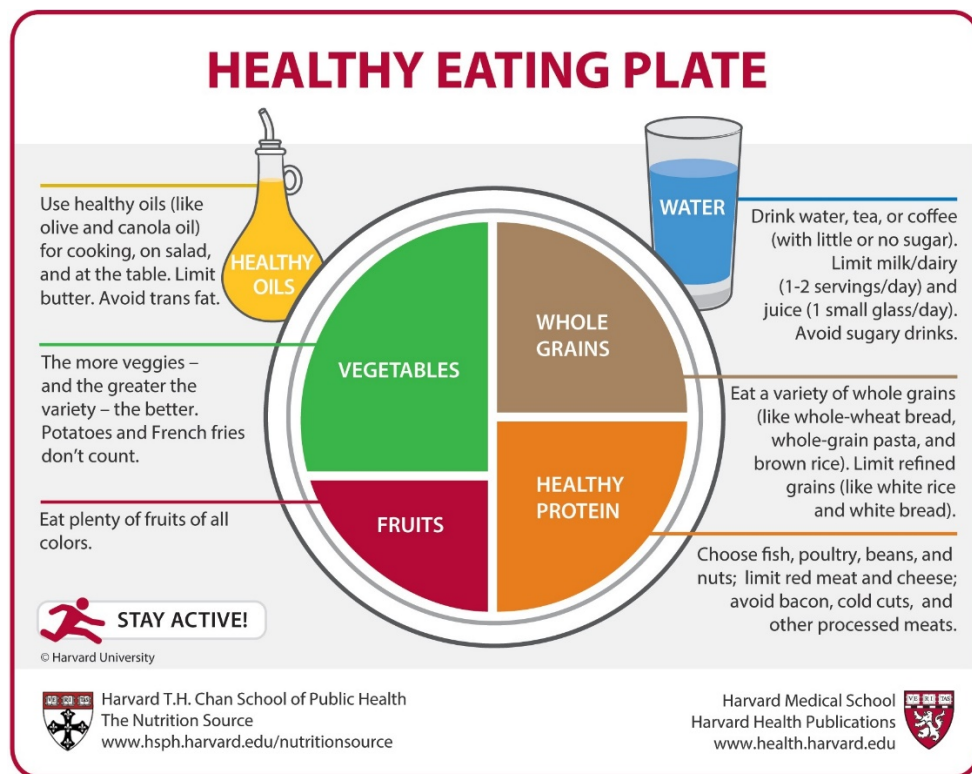
- Limit alcohol intake to 2 glasses per day (20 g/d of alcohol) for men and 1 glass per day (10 g/d of alcohol) for women.
- Aim for at least two alcohol free days in the week.



References

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17 Power Foods for your Heart-Try to include these into your diet



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