



# NUTRITION FACT SHEET

## Eating for Heart Health

### INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular disease is the collective term for diseases that affect or include the heart and/or blood vessels. The most common types of cardiovascular disease in Australia is stroke, heart failure and coronary artery disease.

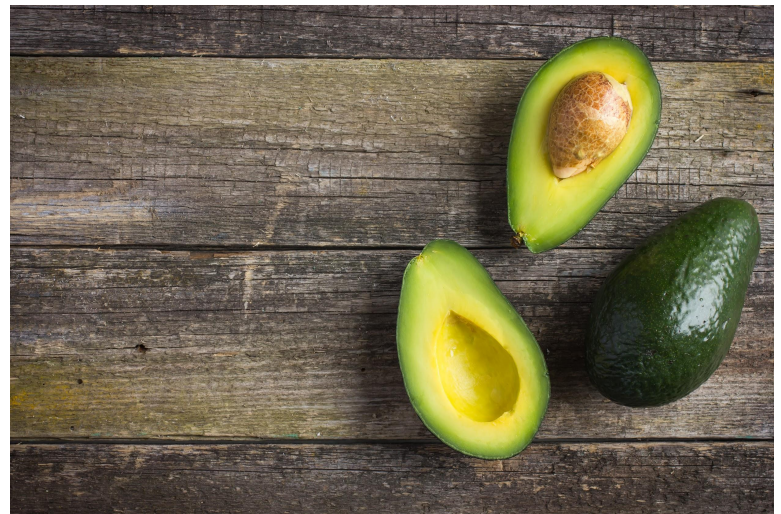
Your diet can strongly reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease by making three simple changes including:

1. Increasing **omega-3** intake by eating more fish
2. Limit saturated fat and choose more **polyunsaturated** and **monounsaturated fat**
3. Increase your **fibre** intake

### EAT MORE FISH

Fish is extremely high in omega-3 which is one type of good fat that can help to improve heart health. Oily fish such as sardines and salmon will contain more omega-3 and will therefore be better for heart health.

It is also important to note that canned, fresh and frozen fish all contain similar amounts of omega-3. Aim to have fish at least twice per week to help increase your omega-3 intake.



### CHOOSE HEALTHY FATS

Limiting unhealthy fats (saturated fat) and choosing healthier fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat) can also help to improve your heart health.

Foods that contain saturated fats include full fat dairy, pastries, butter, coconut oil and the skin on chicken. It is always beneficial to choose skim milk, remove the skin from chicken and limit the amount of butter you spread on bread and use in cooking to improve cardiovascular health.

Foods that contain monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat include sunflower or olive oil, avocado, nuts and seeds, and olive oil based spreads.

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### INCREASE YOUR FIBRE INTAKE

A high fibre diet has also shown to improve heart health and reduce cholesterol levels. Fibre is only found in plant foods such as fruit, vegetables, nuts and grains (breads, cereals, rice and pasta).

Four simple ways to help increase your fibre intake include:

1. Choosing **wholemeal or multigrain** bread over white bread
2. Ensuring you are consuming **two serves of fruit** every day
3. Ensuring half your plate at lunch and dinner consists of vegetables
4. Choose **high fibre cereals** such as porridge, Weet-Bix, Just Right, muesli, All Bran over lower fibre alternatives such as Rice Bubbles or Special K.

When increasing fibre, it is also important to increase water to ensure you are getting the maximum benefit. Ideally, it is recommended to aim for 8 cups (2 liters) of water per day.



#### For more information -

##### **Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute**

<https://www.baker.edu.au/health-hub/fact-sheets/cardiovascular-disease>

##### **Heart Foundation Australia :**

<https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/for-professionals/food-and-nutrition/heart-healthy-eating-principles>

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