



For The Private Hospital Sector

NUTRITION FACT SHEET

Tips To Improve Heart Health

Unhealthy diet is one of the leading risk factors for heart disease in Australia. What you eat and drink can have a direct impact on several heart disease risk factors such as cholesterol and blood pressure. A heart healthy diet may help in reducing cholesterol, improving blood pressure and promote long-term well being. In this fact sheet, we explore the key food sources to improve heart health as well as those that should be limited to promote long-term health.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Foods rich in **healthy fats** can help improve **heart health**. These include **olive oil, avocado, nuts and oily fish**.
2. Foods high in **unhealthy fats should be limited** for better heart health (saturated and trans fats) such as **pastries, cookies, cakes and deep fried foods**.
3. Foods high in **soluble fibre** can **improve heart health**, such as fruits, vegetables, oats, barley and legumes.
4. Foods **high in sodium should be limited** for better healthy heart, such as processed meats, biscuits, pizza, burgers, bread and sauces.

UNHEALTHY FAT

Saturated fats - Consumption of saturated fats is linked with an increased risk of heart disease.

Saturated fats are found in fatty cuts of meat and poultry, palm oil, butter, coconut oil, cream, full fat milk and cheese, as well as manufactured and packaged foods such as pastries, cakes and deep fried foods.

Trans fats - Consumption of trans fats increases the level of LDL (bad) cholesterol and decreases the level of HDL (good) cholesterol in blood, which increase the risk of heart disease.

Trans fats are found in packaged foods and butter.

HEALTHY FAT

Unsaturated fats - Consumption of unsaturated fats decreases level of LDL cholesterol and increases level of HDL cholesterol, which help to reduce the risk of heart disease. This includes monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats.

Monounsaturated fats are found in olive oil, canola oil, avocado, cashews and almonds.

Polyunsaturated fats:

- Omega-3 fats are found in oily fish, e.g. salmon, sardines, mackerel.



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- Omega-6 fats are found in sunflower oil, soybean oil, margarine, walnuts and brazil nuts.

Aim to replace unhealthy fats with healthy fats.

Animal oil	Vegetable oil
Butter	Avocado, peanut butter
Ham, bacon	Salmon, sardine
Full fat milk	Skim or low fat milk
Cakes, pastries	Trail mix nuts
Fatty meat	Lean meat
Poultry with skin	Skinless Poultry

SODIUM

High intake of salt (or sodium) is linked to high blood pressure which can increase the risk of heart disease. The Heart Foundation recommends a daily maximum amount of 2000 mg sodium (equal to 1 teaspoon), however this may be lower depending on your medical condition.

Foods high in sodium are commonly found in processed and packaged foods such as biscuits, muffins, cakes, sauces, pizzas, pies, burgers, bread, breakfast cereals and processed meats like ham, bacon and sausages.

TIPS TO REDUCE SODIUM INTAKE

- Choose low salt cereal such as Weet-Bix, porridge or muesli.
- Add flavour using herbs and spices instead of table salt.
- Choose unprocessed meats such as grilled chicken, roast beef/lamb or tuna instead of ham, bacon or sausages.
- Swap burgers and pizza for healthy wraps.
- Limit sauces eg. tomato, BBQ, gravy and soy sauce.

FIBRE

Soluble fibre - consumption of soluble fibre can decrease the level of LDL (bad) cholesterol, improving heart health.

Soluble fibre are found in fruits, vegetables, oats, barley and legumes.

