

Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes to Lower Cholesterol

To promote heart health, you should:

- Adopt healthy eating habits that include foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and cholesterol.
- Lose weight if you are overweight or obese.
- Increase physical activity. Talk to your healthcare provider to make an appropriate plan for you. Try for 30-60 minutes of exercise each day.
- Cut out smoking/tobacco products. If it is hard to quit on your own, ask for help. All VA Medical Centers have programs to help veterans quit smoking.

Food Group	Best Choices
<p>Grains</p> <p>Choose at least 6 servings each day. A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 slice bread - 1-ounce dry cereal - 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% whole grain breads, rolls, buns, bagels, pita breads and English muffins. • Whole grain soft tortillas, rice cakes, breadsticks • Steel cut oatmeal, dry whole oat cereals • Brown rice and whole grain pasta <p>Tip: Choose more whole grain foods. The words “whole” or “bran” should be listed first on the ingredient label. Look for 100% whole grain.</p>
<p>Vegetables</p> <p>Choose 3 to 5 servings each day. A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 cup raw leafy vegetables - 1/2 cup cooked or chopped raw vegetables - 3/4 cup vegetable juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen and low-sodium canned vegetables • Vegetables steamed or sautéed in canola or olive oil, low-sodium vegetable juice and low-sodium vegetable or clear broth soups

Food Group	Best Choices
<p>Fruits</p> <p>Choose 2 to 4 servings each day. A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 piece of fresh fruit - 1/2 cup canned fruit - 1/4 cup dried fruit - 3/4 cup fruit juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh or frozen fruit, dried fruit without added sugar and canned fruit in natural juice • Choose whole fruit instead of juice to get more fiber. • Fruit is a good choice for a snack or dessert
<p>Dairy Products</p> <p>Choose 2 to 3 low-fat or fat-free servings each day. A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 cup milk - 1 cup yogurt - 1 1/2 -2 ounces cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat-free and 1% milk • Yogurt, cheese, or buttermilk made with skim or 1% milk, cheese made with 3 grams of fat per ounce • Fat-free cream cheese and sour cream • Unsweetened soymilk, rice milk, oat milk, or almond milk
<p>Meat and Meat Substitutes</p> <p>Limit meat to no more than 5 ounces each day.</p> <p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3-ounce meat, fish, poultry - 1/2 cup beans, peas, lentils - 2 egg whites <p>A 3-ounce portion of cooked meat is about the size of a deck of cards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground beef >90% lean, round and loin cuts of beef • Skinless white meat chicken and turkey (not deep-fried) • Canadian bacon • Salmon, tuna (in water), sardines, mackerel, and herring • Imitation “meat” made from soy, egg whites or egg substitutes • Veal, loin and leg cuts of pork and lamb, wild game like venison and elk
<p>Fats, Oils and Sweets</p> <p>Choose margarines with liquid vegetable oil listed before hydrogenated oil on the ingredient list.</p> <p>Limit intake of sweets and snacks, especially if you are overweight. A dessert labeled fat-free can still have calories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canola, olive, avocado, or flaxseed oil • Vegetable cooking sprays • Margarines that help lower cholesterol • Nuts, seeds, avocados, olives, and natural peanut butter • Low-fat gravy (powder mixes or jars) • Sugar-free gelatin, fat-free/sugar-free pudding