

A heart-healthy eating plan can help you manage your [blood cholesterol level](#) and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. Discover how simple it is to avoid excess saturated fat and trans fat while enjoying mouth-watering dishes.

Our cooking tips listed below will help you prepare tasty, heart-healthy meals to improve your cholesterol.

Cooking Tips

Reduce saturated fat in meat and poultry

The American Heart Association recommends a dietary pattern that emphasizes poultry and limits red meat. The amount of saturated fat in meats can vary widely, depending on the cut and how it's prepared. Here are some ways to reduce the saturated fat in meat:

- Select lean cuts of meat with minimal visible fat. Lean beef cuts include the round, chuck, sirloin or loin. Lean pork cuts include the tenderloin or loin chop, while lean lamb cuts come from the leg, arm and loin.
- Buy "choice" or "select" grades rather than "prime." Select lean or extra lean ground beef.
- Trim all visible fat from meat before cooking.
- Broil rather than pan-fry meats such as hamburger, lamb chops, pork chops and steak.
- Use a rack to drain off fat when broiling, roasting or baking. Instead of basting with drippings, keep meat moist with wine, fruit juices or an acceptable oil-based marinade.
- Cook a day ahead of time. Stews, boiled meat, soup stock or other dishes in which fat cooks into the liquid can be refrigerated and the hardened fat removed from the top.
- When a recipe calls for browning the meat first, try browning it under the broiler instead of in a pan.
- Eat chicken and turkey rather than duck and goose, which are higher in fat. Choose white meat most often when eating poultry.
- Remove the skin from chicken or turkey before cooking. If your poultry dries out too much, first try basting with wine, fruit juices or an acceptable oil-based marinade. Or leave the skin on for cooking and remove it before eating.
- Limit processed meats such as sausage, bologna, salami and hot dogs. Many processed meats — even those with "reduced fat" labels — are high in calories and saturated fat. They are often high in sodium as well. Read labels carefully and choose processed meats only occasionally.

Include fish in your dietary pattern

Reduce the meat in your meal

Cook fresh vegetables the heart-healthy way

Use liquid vegetable oils in place of solid fats

Puree fruits and veggies for baking

Lower dairy fats

Sauces and gravies

Increase fiber and whole grains

- Toast and crush or cube fiber-rich whole-grain bread to make breadcrumbs, stuffing or croutons.
- Replace the breadcrumbs in your meatloaf with uncooked oatmeal.
- Serve whole fruit at breakfast in place of juice.
- Use brown rice instead of white rice and try whole grain pasta.
- Add lots of colorful veggies to your salad — carrots, broccoli and cauliflower are high in fiber and give your salad a delicious crunch.

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