

GOOD FOOD BOX



FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

February is Heart Month

Choosing better-for-you foods and using heart-smart cooking techniques can help you control risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and elevated blood pressure.

Here are 10 ways to be good to your heart.

- **Cook Heart Smart:** steam, bake, broil or grill instead of frying. Reduce salt by avoiding bouillon or salty broth (use water instead); add lots of herbs and spices for flavor.
- **Choose whole grains:** fibre in whole grains like oats, quinoa, whole wheat and barley can help lower blood pressure.
- **Stay away from trans fat:** this unhealthy fat is linked to clogged arteries and high cholesterol. Check food labels. The Nutrition fact panel will list any trans fat in foods such as cookies, pies & other baked goods.
- **Control your portions:** the amount we eat has increased over the past two decades. Eating smaller portions can help control your weight & reduce your risk of heart disease. Try using smaller plates & bowls.
- **Cut back on sodium:** too much salt (sodium chloride) can raise your risk of high blood pressure. Most of our sodium comes from processed foods. Our upper limit is 2300 mg of sodium per day. Compare food labels for lower options.
- **Max out vegetables and fruit:** aim for at least 6 servings/day for heart-healthy antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and fibre. Start meals with vegetable soup or salad, snack on fruit & vegetables and fill half your plate with vegetable side dishes.
- **Eat more beans:** legumes such as kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils are high in cholesterol-lowering fibre.
- **Cook from scratch:** when you control what goes into your food, you can cook with less salt, sugar and fat, and add more vegetables and whole grains
- **Drink skim or 1% milk:** two or three daily servings of low fat dairy products can help reduce blood pressure levels; it's important to have milk and yogurt in your diet.
- **Enjoy fish more often:** the healthy omega-3 polyunsaturated fat found in fish may help decrease blood pressure and triglyceride levels, which helps lower heart disease risk. Aim for 2-3 servings (75 g) of omega-3-rich salmon, tuna, trout, sardines or mackerel each week.

Potatoes

Nutrition: an excellent source of potassium, good source of Vitamin C, folic acid & fiber.
Store in a root cellar or at 45 – 50 °F away from direct light, in paper or a ventilated plastic bag.

New or small mini potatoes are best stored the refrigerator.

Preparation: use a scrub brush & wash thoroughly. Cook with peel to retain more nutrients.

Avocado

Nutrition: source of potassium, folic acid, beta-carotene, lutein, Vitamin E & K. High in heart healthy fats – enjoy in small servings.

To ripen, leave on your counter until darker green & slightly soft.

Preparation: wash, cut in half, remove pit & scoop out avocado with small spoon.

Add to salads or sandwiches, instead of butter.

Homemade guacamole:

Mash avocado; add ½ cup salsa & mix well. Add hot pepper sauce or flakes if desired. Serve with baked tortilla chips.

Do you have questions about nutrition and healthy eating?

EatRight Ontario provides free nutrition advice from Registered Dietitians

Call toll free: 1-877-510-510-2

or visit www.eatrightontario.ca

SUPPORTERS OF THE GOOD FOOD BOX



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RECIPES

Physical Activity can be a lifesaver!

Speak to your health care provider before starting a program to discuss what is right for you.

Aim for at least **150 minutes** of activity per week in 10 minute bouts or more.

Spread the activity out over several days of the week.

Brisk walking, bike riding, jogging, exercise classes can be enjoyable activities with family & friends.

Some of the benefits of physical activity are:

- lower risk of heart disease and stroke
- reduced stress levels
- increase energy
- improved sleep
- improved digestion
- managing weight

Regular activity also helps prevent and control risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, certain types of cancer and obesity.

Info adapted from Heart & Stroke: visit their web site: search "healthy living" to discover other tips for healthy eating & physical activity

Black Bean & Couscous Salad

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup (175 mL) low sodium chicken broth or water
- ¾ cup (175 mL) whole-wheat couscous
- ½ cup (125 mL) frozen or canned corn, drained
- ½ cup (125 mL) diced green pepper
- ½ cup (125 mL) chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup (250 mL) canned or cooked black beans, rinsed
- ¼ cup (50 mL) chopped green onion
- Juice of 1 lime ~2 Tbsp (30 mL)
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) canola or olive oil
- 1 tsp (5 mL) cumin
- ½ tsp (2 mL) black pepper

Preparation:

In a small pot, bring the chicken stock or water to a boil. Turn off the heat and add the couscous. Let it sit for 5 minutes and then fluff with a fork and transfer it to a large bowl. Add the rest of the ingredients and toss. Chill for 1 hour and up to 2 days.

Recipe adapted from EatRight Ontario

Hearty Salmon Chowder

- 1 can (7 ½ oz/213 g) salmon
- 2 tsp (10 mL) canola or olive oil
- ½ cup (125 mL) each chopped onion & celery
- ¼ cup (50 mL) chopped green pepper
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 cups (750 mL) diced potatoes
- 1 cup (250 mL) diced carrots
- 1 cup water & sodium reduced chicken stock
- ½ tsp each (2 mL) coarse pepper & dill seed
- 1 cup diced zucchini (optional)
- 1 can 2% (370 mL) evaporated milk
- 1 can (10 oz/284 mL) cream-style corn
- black pepper
- ½ cup (125 mL) chopped fresh parsley

Preparation:

Drain & flake salmon, reserving liquid. In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Cook onion, celery, green pepper & garlic, stirring often, for 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add potatoes, carrots, water, broth, pepper & dill seed; bring to a boil, cover & simmer for 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add zucchini, simmer covered for another 5 minutes. Add salmon, reserved liquid, evaporated milk, corn & pepper to taste. Cook over low heat just until heated through. Just before serving, stir in parsley. Makes 4 main course servings of 1 ¾ cups each. *Recipe adapted from Lighthearted at Home cookbook by Anne Lindsay.*

Oranges in Yogurt Cream

- 1 cup (250 mL) low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) orange juice concentrate
- 2 medium oranges, peeled & sliced crosswise
- Ground cinnamon

In a bowl, whisk together yogurt & orange juice concentrate.

Spoon evenly over 4 dessert plates.

Arrange orange slices on top of yogurt.

Sprinkle lightly with cinnamon & serve.

Recipe source: Choice Menus by M Hollands