

HEALTHY EATING



Agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis. But too few people truly understand this contribution. This is particularly the case in our schools, where students may only be exposed to agriculture if they enroll in related vocational training.

Each American farmer feeds more than 165 people ... a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. Quite simply, American agriculture is doing more - and doing it better. As the world population soars, there is an even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in the United States.

Heart-Healthy Choices



February is Heart Health Month. Your heart is the most important involuntary muscle in your body. Unlike your skeletal muscles (biceps, abdominal muscles, and triceps), your heart is a cardiac muscle that is not controlled by individual volition. In other words, you do not have to tell your heart to beat. Even though our heart does all of the work for us without thought, we often do not take care of our heart. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Over 600,000 people die every year from heart disease. Making heart-healthy choices through proper exercise and nutrition can help decrease the chances of developing heart disease. Here are 7 heart healthy choices that you can make to make your heart healthy this month.

- 1. Make better nutritional choices.** Eating healthier is an easy intention, but often difficult to put into action. Improving your nutritional habits can stave off chronic disease. Increase your consumption of fruits, vegetables, and nuts. Monitor your intake of fatty foods and foods that are high in sugar.
- 2. Exercising 150 minutes per week.** Exercising helps lower cholesterol levels, decreases body fat, and improves muscle tone. At least half of the 150 minutes of exercise should be at a moderate to vigorous pace. Moderate pace activities include; walking briskly, water aerobics, bicycling, tennis, ballroom dancing, and general gardening. Vigorous pace activities include; jogging, running, swimming laps, aerobic dancing, hiking, and jumping rope.
- 3. Maintaining a healthy body weight.** Improved nutrition and exercise habits will improve your chances of maintaining a healthy body weight. Maintaining a healthy weight reduces the burden of your heart and blood vessels.
- 4. Quitting cigarettes.** Smoking damages the lining of your arteries, leading to a buildup of fatty material that narrows your heart arteries. The narrowing of arteries can lead to heart disease and/or a heart attack. The carbon dioxide in tobacco smoke reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood, forcing your heart to work hard to produce oxygen for your body.
- 5. Managing blood pressure.** Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the blood vessel walls. High pressure in the arteries leads to hypertension. Reduction of stress and increased levels of physical activity can help improve high blood pressure.
- 6. Controlling cholesterol.** Keeping your cholesterol at bay will give your arteries the best chance to stay clear of fatty blockages that reduce blood flow. Foods like oats, salmon, nuts, tea, beans, olive oil, spinach, and avocado can help reduce your cholesterol levels.
- 7. Reducing blood sugar.** Keeping your blood sugar under control is one of the best things you can do for your heart. High levels of blood sugar can lead to diabetes. Pay special attention to your carbohydrate intake by choosing whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. Avoid sugary drinks, sweets, and candy.

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