Fish, Meat, Poultry, Dairy, and Eggs

Session 4
Background Information
Tips
Goals
Why Is Fish Important?

Eating fish can reduce your risk for heart disease. This is because fish are high in the healthy fats.

Excellent fish choices include:

- Salmon
- Mackerel
- Herring
- Lake trout
- Canned light tuna

How Much Fish Should I Eat?

You should eat fish often. Try to eat fish at least once a week to help lower your chances of heart disease.

What Fish Should I Eat?

In deciding what fish to eat, pay attention to mercury levels. Mercury is harmful to everyone if eaten at high levels. It is especially harmful for pregnant or nursing women and for children.

Use the following guidelines to plan the types and amounts of fish you eat:

- Eat as many as one to two servings (three ounces) per week of fish or seafood low in mercury. These fish include:
  - Canned light tuna
  - Catfish
  - Shrimp
  - Salmon
  - Trout
  - Anchovies
  - Atlantic mackerel
  - Herring

- Eat no more than one serving (three ounces) per week of fish high in mercury and serve even smaller portions of these fish to children. If you are planning to become pregnant or become pregnant, do not eat fish high in mercury. Fish high in mercury include:
  - King mackerel
  - Tilefish
  - Shark
  - Swordfish
  - Albacore tuna
How Should I Prepare Fish?

For the healthiest fish, try:

- Baking, broiling, grilling, sautéing, or frying in vegetable oils. If you need recipe ideas, see pages 19-25 of the Cookbook. Also, if you are eating out, keep in mind that fried fish at restaurants may contain unhealthy trans fats and excess salt.

Why Should I Eat Poultry?

Poultry, including chicken and turkey, is a good food to eat for heart health.

Though its fat content varies (low in white meat, modest in dark meat, and high in the skin), the fat quality of poultry is quite good.

Plus, poultry costs less than meat and fish, so it is a good choice to eat often—three or more times a week is fine.

How Should I Prepare My Poultry?

To prepare your poultry in the most heart healthy ways, consider:

- Baking, broiling, or barbecuing chicken. See page 16 of the Cookbook for a tasty, crispy baked chicken recipe.
- Frying poultry in heart healthy vegetable oils. Turn to pages C-75 and C-76 to learn more about frying in oil.
- Eating chicken with the skin on if you enjoy it. Chicken skin is high in fat, but the fat quality is good. So, it is okay to eat the skin if you enjoy it. Just remember, the skin is also high in calories (especially if fried). If you eat the skin, you should cut down on the total amount of chicken or other foods you eat at that meal.
- Restaurant fried chicken may have unhealthy trans fats and is usually high in salt. Ask your restaurant what type of oil they use for frying.
**What Should I Know About Red Meat (Beef, Pork, and Lamb)?**

In the past, saturated fat was thought to increase the risk of heart disease, so prior guidelines suggested limiting red meat, which is high in saturated fat. However, recent studies suggest saturated fat does not increase heart disease risk. That said, saturated fat does not decrease the risk of heart disease, like foods with healthy fats and whole grains.

Many experts suggest limiting red meat to no more than one to two servings per day (including breakfast, lunch, and dinner). This is because there are many healthy options to plan a meal besides red meat (such as poultry, fish, beans). Also, people who eat large amounts of red meat have a modest increased risk for colon cancer.

**What Should I Know About Processed Meats Like Bacon, Sausage, Hot Dogs, and Cold Cuts (Including Deli Meats, Like Turkey and Beef)?**

In most studies, processed meats have been shown to increase your chances of getting heart disease. This is likely due to the preservatives (salt, nitrites, phosphates) in processed meats. Thus, it makes sense to limit processed meat to a couple of times per week.

**What Should I Know About Dairy Products (Milk, Cheese, and Dairy Desserts)?**

Whole milk and full fat dairy products are generally high in saturated fat. As noted above, recent studies suggest saturated fat does not increase the risk of heart disease. Also, milk and milk products are high in other nutrients that are good for you, like calcium and some vitamins. If you enjoy dairy products, it is reasonable to consume two to three servings per day of either full fat or low-fat dairy products, according to your preference.

**What Types of Dairy Products Should I Eat?**

Dairy desserts, such as ice cream, ice milk, and frozen yogurt contain more sugar than other dairy products. Thus, it makes sense to limit this type of dairy product to a couple of times a week.
What Should I Know About Eggs?

Not too long ago, people were told to avoid eggs in their diet. This is because eggs are high in cholesterol. However, eggs are also a very good source of protein and contain reasonable amounts of healthy fats. Thus, the current thinking is that eggs are a good food choice.

How Many Eggs Should I Be Eating?

If you enjoy eggs, eating one to two a day is fine.

How Should I Prepare My Eggs?

Here are some heart healthy ways to prepare eggs:

- Try hard-boiling eggs. Hard-boiled eggs can be great on salads or as a healthy snack.
- Scramble your eggs or fry them in heart healthy oils.
- Remember to go easy on the salt.

Summary

Here is a summary of key points about Fish, Meat, Poultry, Dairy, and Eggs.

- You should aim to consume fish one or more times a week, as fish contain heart healthy fats.
- Poultry is an inexpensive food that is good for your heart. Eating the skin is fine if you enjoy it.
- Avoid processed meats and eat red meat in moderation, up to one to two servings per day.
- Dairy products and eggs are other good choices.
1. Choose fish more often. Aim for one or more servings of fish per week.
   - Try baked, broiled, grilled, or fried fish. See Cookbook, pages 19-25 for tasty ways to cook fish.
   - When frying fish, use vegetable oils instead of shortening or lard.
   - Try some of the fish that have healthy fats, like canned tuna, herring, canned or fresh salmon, or lake trout.
   - When you eat canned tuna, choose light tuna (most albacore or white tuna is higher in mercury).
   - Some fish contain mercury, which can be harmful if large amounts are eaten. So eat fish with low levels of mercury, such as salmon, catfish, shrimp, and canned light tuna.

2. Cut down on bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and cold cuts. Aim for three times a week or less.
   - Try having breakfast without meat on some days.
   - Try sandwiches made with:
     - Sliced fresh beef, pork, chicken, or turkey as fresh meat are better choices than processed meats (cold cuts).
     - Chicken, egg, or tuna salad (these “salad” sandwiches usually contain mayonnaise, which has healthy fats that are good for your heart).
     - Peanut butter and jelly or banana.
   - Also, try these other ideas for lunches:
     - Healthy leftovers.
     - Soups (low salt/sodium).
     - Salads with dressing.

Check the goals you want to work on for the next contact.
3. Eat chicken and turkey often. It is reasonable to eat three or more servings of poultry each week.
   • Bake, broil, or barbecue chicken. See recipe for crispy baked chicken on page 16 in our Cookbook.
   • Fried chicken is also okay, if fried in healthy vegetable oils.
   • Do not fry chicken in shortening as most shortening still has trans fats.
   • Fresh chicken or turkey is better for sandwiches than chicken or turkey cold cuts.

4. If you like eating red meat, like beef, pork, or lamb, aim for no more than two servings per day.
   • Red meat is high in saturated fat. Although experts no longer think saturated fat causes heart disease, it does not reduce the risk of heart disease like some other foods. Also, high intake of red meat may lead to a modest increase in colon cancer. One to two servings per day is a good goal.

5. Dairy products, like milk cheese and yogurt, are good choices.
   • Full fat dairy products are high in saturated fat, but do not seem to increase the risk for heart disease. If you enjoy dairy products, two to three servings per day of low- or full fat dairy products is a good goal.
   • Dessert dairy products, like ice cream, ice milk, and frozen yogurt are high in sugars and it is best to save these treats for a couple of times a week.

6. Eggs are also a good food choice.
   • It is true that eggs are high in cholesterol and in the past there were recommendations to lower egg intake. However, eggs are also very high in other nutrients and egg intake of one to two per day does not increase the risk of heart disease. If you enjoy eggs, eating one to two a day is fine.
My Goals and First Steps

To make changes, it is important to make goals and keep track of your progress. On the other side of this sheet, write down the two goals you selected to work on today. Then write down your “First Steps” for achieving these goals. First Steps should be specific and realistic to get you started.

To plan First Steps, think about:

- When you will start working towards this goal.
- What you need to get started.
- If you can actually reach the goal.

Also, the other side of this sheet has two tables to help you keep track of your progress.
Date: ______________________

**Goal 1:** ________________________________  **Goal 2:** ________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

**First Steps:** ____________________________  **First Steps:** ____________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Place this sheet where you will see it often (refrigerator or bathroom mirror). You may monitor goals by the week (left side of table) or by the day (right side of table).

**GOAL 1: Did you meet your goal? (Circle ☑ for Yes, or ☐ for No)**

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**GOAL 2: Did you meet your goal? (Circle ☑ for Yes, or ☐ for No)**

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