

Delicious Decisions: Choosing Healthy Food for Your Heart



These heart healthy tips and recipes can support cardiovascular health.

From Good Housekeeping

Eating smarter and keeping your heart in peak shape is about more than munching on a celery stick now and then. It's about the bigger picture — the pattern of decisions you make every day. Because heart disease claims more American lives than any other illness, now is an ideal time to look at how your food choices affect your overall heart health.

To help keep important heart-health indicators like blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar (glucose) at the right levels, the American Heart Association recommends eating a wide, balanced variety of nutritious foods.

Great news: Even simple, small changes can make a big difference. By starting to mix lower-calorie, nutrient-rich foods into your meal planning, you'll not only get a full complement of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other essentials, but also a dazzling array of colors, tastes, and textures every day of the week.

Start on the Path to Smarter Eating

Healthy cooking and eating is a great opportunity to sample new recipes and rediscover delicious favorites. Some tips to get started:

Focus your eating plan on vegetables and fruits, which are high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Try them fresh, frozen, or canned, without added salt and sugars. Reduce the role of meat from star to supporting player. Mix things up with two or more vegetarian-style meals each week. If you do serve meat or poultry, make sure it's lean and skinless, and grill, bake, or broil it. Oily fish such as salmon, trout, and herring contain omega-3 fatty acids, which studies show may help lower the risk of getting coronary disease. Serve up fish at least twice a week.

Choose whole grain foods like brown rice and whole wheat pasta — their high fiber content can help lower cholesterol levels and aid in weight management. Go with fat-free, 1 percent fat, and low-fat dairy products. Jazz up plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt with flavorful fruits. Natural fruit

juices (with no added sugar) are better than regular soft drinks, but shouldn't take the place of eating whole fruits. To quench your thirst, drink water or club soda — zest it up with a wedge of lemon or lime. There's nothing wrong with snacking, as long as you stock your kitchen, car, office, or bag with nutrient-rich nibbles like fresh or dried fruits, unsalted almonds, unsalted rice cakes, or carrots and other veggies.

Serve Yourself

So, how much of all this good stuff is right for you? It depends on the number of calories your body needs to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. For example, here's an eating plan based on 2,100 calories per day:

Food Type: Grains (mainly whole grains)

Servings: 6-8 per day

Food Type: Vegetables

Servings: 4-5 per day

Food Type: Fruits

Servings: 4-5 per day

Food Type: Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products

Servings: 2-3 per day

Food Type: Lean meats, poultry, and fish

Servings: 6 or less per day

Food Type: Nuts, seeds, and legumes

Servings: 4-5 per week

Food Type: Fats and oils

Servings: 2-3 per day

Food Type: Sweets and added sugars

Servings: 5 or less per week

Four or five servings of vegetables might sound like a lot, but when you understand the true size of a serving, you'll see how easy it is. Here are some examples of single-serving sizes:

Grains: 1 slice bread; 1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal; 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta (about the size of 1/2 baseball)

Vegetables: 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables (about the size of a small fist); 1/2 cup other vegetables; or 1/2 cup vegetable juice

Fruits: 1 medium fruit (about the size of a baseball); 1/2 cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit; or 1/2 cup juice

Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, and nuts: 2 to 3 ounces cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1/2 cup cooked dry beans; or 2 tablespoons peanut butter

Milk, yogurt, and cheese: 1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt; 1 1/2 ounces fat-free or low-fat cheese

Switch It Up

If you were learning to swim, you probably wouldn't start by diving into the deep end. Likewise, to make smarter choices in your daily eating, start gradually by switching out some less-healthy foods with nutrient-rich options. Here are some easy ways to jump in:

For more fruits: Instead of a stack of cookies, crunch into a medium apple. Ditch that 2-ounce bag of pork rinds and eat 1/4 cup dried apricots.

For more vegetables: Scale that hamburger back from 6 ounces to 3, pairing it with 1/2 cup carrots and 1/2 cup spinach. Instead of 5 ounces of chicken, use a small amount of vegetable oil to stir-fry 2 ounces chicken with 1 1/2 cups raw vegetables.

For more fat-free or low-fat milk products: Instead of a 1/2-cup serving of full-fat ice cream, have a 1/2-cup serving of low-fat frozen yogurt, livened up with some fresh fruit.



Could Drinking Water Before Meals Help You Lose Weight?

People who drank two glasses prior to eating dropped more pounds, study found

By Jenifer GoodwinHealthDay Reporter

(HealthDay News) -- Close the diet books and skip the pills. The latest weight-loss trick may be as simple as gulping a couple of glasses of water before you eat.

A new study found that middle-aged and older adults who drank two cups of water before each meal consumed fewer calories and lost more weight than those who skipped drinking water.

Researchers divided two groups of overweight and obese men and women aged 55 to 75 into two groups: one group was told to follow a low-fat, low-calorie diet; the other group was told to follow the same diet and to drink two cups of water before breakfast, lunch and dinner.

After 12 weeks, those who drank water before meals had lost 15.5 pounds, compared to 11 pounds for the non-water drinkers, a nearly 30 percent difference.

The researchers got the idea for the weight-loss program from their prior research, which found that when middle-aged and older adults drank water before meals, they ate between 75 and 90 fewer calories at the meal.

What they weren't sure about, however, was if water drinkers would compensate by eating more throughout the rest of the day, said senior study author Brenda Davy, an associate professor in the department of human nutrition, foods and exercise at Virginia Tech. But after 12 weeks of dieting, that didn't happen.

"Drinking more water is a pretty simple strategy that may be helpful to people trying to lose weight," Davy said. "We're not saying, 'Drink more water and the body fat will melt away'. But for people who are trying to lose weight and trying to follow a low-cal diet, it's something they can do as part of that."

The research was to be presented Monday at the annual meeting of the American Chemical Society in Boston.

One of the most vexing issues with dieting is how difficult it is to keep the weight off long-term, Davy said. After the 12 weeks were up, Davy and her colleagues have continued to follow the participants.

After one year, preliminary data shows that those who continued to drink water before meals not only kept those pounds off, but have even continued to lose a bit more -- about 1.5 pounds on average.

Yet pre-meal water chugging comes with one caveat: it may only work if you're middle-aged or older, Davy said.

Prior research has shown that in those aged 18 to 35, drinking water before the meal did not cause them to eat fewer calories at the meal, Davy said.

In older people, it takes longer for the stomach to empty, which may be why the water helps them feel fuller and less hungry, while in younger people, water begins leaving the stomach almost immediately, Davy said.

Barry Popkin, director of the University of North Carolina Nutrition Obesity Research Center, called the findings "promising." His research has shown people who drinks lots of water drink fewer sugary beverages, eat more fruits and vegetables and overall consume fewer calories throughout the day.

One culprit in the obesity epidemic is that Americans consume some 300 calories more a day in sugary beverages than they did 30 years ago, Popkin added. That includes soda, punch and fruit juices with added sugar, sports drinks and sweetened tea.

"If you drink some more water right before a meal and fill up a little bit right before, there is the potential you may reduce your food intake," Popkin said. "But what we're concerned with is encouraging people to drink water to replace all the caloric beverages we're drinking."

Another challenge to the water-before-meals weight-loss strategy is getting people to do it, said Carla Wolper, an assistant professor in the Eating Disorders Center at Columbia University and a research faculty member at the New York Obesity Research Center at St. Luke's Hospital in New York City.

"The question is, do people continue to drink the water in a non-study situation?" Wolper said. "We know there are a lot of simple things people could do to lose weight. Clinical trials have shown if people write down what they eat, they lost twice as much weight. Yet it's very hard to get people to write down what they eat. Or, if people would reduce portions just a little bit, they would lose weight. But people don't do it."

The same goes for drinking more water. Even seemingly small changes require commitment. "Changing a pattern of behavior is complicated, and requires time and energy," Wolper said.

Still, it could be worth a try, she added. "Unless people overload on water, it's harmless, inexpensive. And if over the course of the entire day, it reduces the amount of food people take in, then of course it's a good idea," Wolper said.

Dieticians often will suggest a non-caloric drink such as club soda with lemon, diet soda or tea to help resist the urge to snack after dinner, Wolper said.

Make Some Extra Cash and Workout for Free!

St. Andrew's Family Fitness is currently hiring swim instructors with a WSI certificate or people with experience teaching swim lessons. Lessons are held from 4-7pm Tuesdays and Thursdays. We also have Saturday swim lessons that start at 8:45am and run until 1:30pm every Saturday. We have lessons year round except for the month of December. We pay \$7.50 per 30 minute class. This is perfect if you need a little extra cash and want a free membership!

If you or someone you know are interested, please apply today either online (http://www.standrewsfitness.com/ffp_job.html) or at our administration building, 1095 Playground Rd.

Are Energy Drinks Fattening?

Calories in sports drinks can add up, but you may still need them.

by Martica Heaner, Ph.D., M.A., M.Ed., for MSN Health & Fitness



Q. I'm trying to avoid sugary drinks to help lose weight, but am unsure if I should avoid energy drinks, since they are supposed to be good for you, especially the ones with vitamins. Are energy, vitamin and/or sports beverages OK to drink?

A. Quenching your thirst with sodas and sweetened drinks is a big diet don't, since liquid calories may make it harder to regulate your total caloric

intake, and therefore can make it easier to gain weight.

Sports and energy drinks also have calorie-containing sweeteners, so they can also contribute to weight gain. In fact, an energy drink is not a true energy drink unless it contains calories, because calories are what provide energy for your body. That means that a very low-calorie, vitamin-infused beverage that calls itself an energy drink, really isn't one. (One exception: If the drink contains caffeine—a stimulant—then its energy claim may fly.)

Does that mean you should not drink sports drinks? Not necessarily. There are times when you can benefit from them, especially during long or hard workouts. I have written more about them [here](#).

But if you are trying to limit how many calories you consume, it's probably smarter to be more judicious about the types of calories you take in and try to get the most nutrients per calorie that you can. The 100 to 200 calories you might get from one energy drink would be better if they came from real food such as fruit or whole-grain bread; you'll get fiber and plenty of nutrients along with the calories.

So what about vitamin-fortified drinks? These drinks may sound better for you than they actually are. Some give you calories from sugar or corn syrup along with the vitamins and minerals that are added. But even those that are low in calories aren't necessarily providing you with nutrients that you need, especially if you already have a good diet, eat fortified cereals, take a multivitamin or eat any other foods with extra nutrients added.

Whether you need to supplement at all is a bigger question. Studies indicate that most people don't. While conventional wisdom assumes that supplementing with extra vitamins and minerals can't hurt, there's evidence to suggest that they don't help much.

So if you're trying to cut calories, drinks that contain calories are probably best avoided. And if you're trying to meet your quota of vitamins and minerals, it's best to do that by eating more fresh foods, including plenty of fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans and seeds.

So what should you drink? Water! Water has ZERO calories. Up to 75 percent of your body is made of water, and every single cell needs it to work well. If you are even slightly dehydrated (up to a 2 percent water loss), you may feel tired. So even though, technically, water doesn't give you energy, by keeping you hydrated it can make you feel more energized. Being well-hydrated makes you look, feel and perform better.

If you are conditioned to crave strongly flavored sweet drinks, here are some tips to make water more palatable:

- Add a **citrus twist** to tap water. Just squeeze in a bit of lemon, orange, grapefruit or lime.
- Add **cucumber slices** to your water, spa-style, for a cool, refreshing flavor.
- Although it's more eco-friendly to drink filtered tap water, if your taste buds don't love plain old water, experiment with **different types of bottled water** to find one you enjoy. Each brand can taste quite different.
- Add a **splash of apple, cranberry or pomegranate juice** to your water to give it color and flavor.

Martica Heaner, Ph.D., M.A., M.Ed., is a Manhattan-based exercise physiologist and nutritionist, and an award-winning fitness instructor and health writer. She has a Ph.D. in behavioral nutrition and physical activity from Columbia University, and is also a NASM-certified personal trainer. She has written hundreds of articles for publications such as *Self*, *Health*, *Prevention*, *The New York Times* and others. Martica is the author of eight books, including her latest, [Cross-Training for Dummies](#). ([Read her full bio.](#))

Fitness for kids: Getting your children off the couch



Direct your child's energy into a lifelong love of physical activity.

From MayoClinic.com

For many children, biking to the playground and playing kickball in the backyard have given way to watching television, playing video games and spending hours online. But it's never too late to get your kids off the couch. Use these simple tips

to give your kids a lifelong appreciation for activities that strengthen their bodies.

Set a good example

If you want active kids, be active yourself. Go for a brisk walk, ride your bike or spend some time gardening. Kids ages 6 to 17 years old need at least an hour a day of such moderate activities. Three or more days a week should be more vigorous activities such as those that include running or jumping rope. Adults need at least 2.5 hours a week of moderate intensity exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous activities.

Invite your family to play catch or to join you on a walk. Talk about physical activity as an opportunity to take care of your body, rather than a punishment or a chore. Praise, reward and encourage activity. Set goals and have everyone track their activities and progress.

"A parent's active lifestyle is a powerful stimulus for a child," says Edward Laskowski, M.D., a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation and co-director of the Sports Medicine Center at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn. "You are a role model for your children; set a good example by making physical activity a priority in your life."

Limit screen time

A surefire way to increase your children's activity levels is to limit the number of hours they're allowed to watch television each day. You might limit screen time — including television, video games and computer time. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than one to two hours a day. To make it easier, don't put a television in your children's bedrooms, and keep the computer in a family area. Also consider limiting other sedentary activities, such as text messaging or chatting on the phone.

If your children play video games, opt for those that require movement. Activity-oriented video games — such as dance video games and video games that use a player's physical movements to control what happens on the screen — boost a child's calorie-burning power. In a Mayo Clinic study, kids who traded sedentary screen time for active screen time more than doubled their energy expenditure.

Establish a routine

Set aside time each day for physical activity. Get up early with your children to walk the dog or take a walk together after dinner. Start small, gradually adding new activities to the routine as you — and your children — become more fit.

Let your children set the pace

For many kids, organized sports are a great way to stay fit. But team sports or dance classes aren't the only options. If your child is artistically inclined, take a nature hike to collect leaves and rocks that your child can use to make a collage. If your child likes to climb, head for the nearest neighborhood jungle gym. If your child likes to read, walk or bike to the neighborhood library for a book. Or simply turn on your child's favorite music and dance in the living room.

"Every child is wired differently," Dr. Laskowski says. "We all have certain strengths and characteristics that influence our interests. The key is finding things that your children like to do."

Promote activity, not exercise

To keep your kids interested in fitness, make it fun.

- **Get in the game.** Play catch, get the whole family involved in a game of tag or have a jump-rope contest. Try classic movement games such as Simon says or red light, green light. If you don't remember the rules, make up your own!
- **Try an activity party.** For your child's next birthday, schedule a bowling party, take the kids to a climbing wall or set up relay races in the backyard.
- **Put your kids in charge.** Let each child take a turn choosing the activity of the day or week. Batting cages, bowling and neighborhood play areas all count. What matters is that you're doing something active.
- **Give the gift of activity.** Make gifts and rewards things like activity-related equipment, games or outings.

"Incorporating physical activity into your children's lives does much more than promote a healthy weight," Dr. Laskowski says. "It sets the foundation for a lifetime of fitness and good health."

Be sure to bring your kids to the St. Andrew's Family Fitness Plus Kidz Fitness program, which runs Monday – Friday mornings from 9:00am – 11:00am and evenings from 4:00pm – 6:30pm.

Follow Us On Facebook and You Could Win!

Login to your Facebook account and "Like" St. Andrew's Family Fitness Plus and post a message stating you are a member and why you love St. Andrew's Family Fitness. The first 20 members to do this will win a Race to Savings card.

Member Appreciation Day

Food, Fun and Fitness

Join us on Saturday, September 18th from 10:00 – 1:00 for another spectacular member appreciation day. Bring an appetite because we will be grill up another mess of chicken on the grill.

Bring the whole family because we will have multiple cornhole/baggo games setup outside of the club for you to play.



So now that you are marking this date in your day planner/Blackberry/PDA/Droid, remember to invite a friend to workout with you. Your friend's workout will be FREE!

www.standrewsfitness.com

843-763-3850