



Your everyday guide to  
**HeartSmart™**  
**LIVING**

Simple changes can make a difference



HEART  
AND STROKE  
FOUNDATION

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Takes your health to heart.

# HeartSmart™ living, day by day



**H**eat disease and stroke are the leading causes of death in Canada, and the incidence of both is expected to increase significantly as our population ages. That's why there's no time like the present to begin a HeartSmart™ lifestyle to minimize your risk factors.

Some risk factors can't be controlled. These include gender, age, family medical history and ethnic descent (people of African, Caribbean, South Asian or First Nations descent are more likely to be at risk of heart disease).

But the good news is that many risk factors can be controlled. These include

high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and smoking. All of these can be influenced by lifestyle, such as healthy eating habits, physical activity, smoking cessation and stress management.

This booklet is brought to you by Becel, in association with the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Let it guide you on your journey to HeartSmart™ living. In it you'll find practical tips on how to manage the risk factors you can control, self-assessment tools to help you incorporate heart healthy habits into your life, and delicious recipes that make it easy to eat heart healthy foods. We encourage you to review the booklet again in three and six months to see how well you're doing.

**Tip:** Mark the date on your calendar now, so you will really do it!

For most people, the secret to helping improve heart health is simple: Make small changes to lifestyle and eating habits, one step at a time.

# Eating






## The facts about fat

A diet high in fat, especially saturated fat and trans fat, can contribute to elevated blood cholesterol levels. This can cause fatty deposits to build up inside artery walls, slowing blood flow and increasing the risk of blockage – which can result in heart disease or stroke.

But quality of fat, not just quantity, matters. To make healthy choices, use this handy chart to identify heart healthy fats, and read food labels to help you limit your intake of saturated and trans fat.



Fat intake should be between 20 per cent and 35 per cent of total calorie intake. For women this means about 45–75 grams of fat a day. For men this means 65–105 grams a day.

Type of Fat	Heart Healthy?	Sources
<b>Saturated fat</b> raises blood cholesterol levels.		Animal sources like fattier cuts of meat, butter, higher-fat cheeses, cream, shortening, processed and fast food.
<b>Trans fat</b> raises blood cholesterol levels.		Processed foods containing partially hydrogenated fat, such as cookies and crackers, as well as deep-fried foods and some hard margarines.
<b>Monounsaturated fat</b> tends to lower blood cholesterol levels.		Olive and canola oils; soft, non hydrogenated margarines containing these oils; nuts, seeds, avocados and olives.
<b>Polyunsaturated fat</b> actively lowers blood cholesterol levels.		Sunflower, corn, safflower, canola and soybean oils. Foods such as soft, non hydrogenated margarines containing these oils. Nuts and seeds.
Omega-3 fat (a type of polyunsaturated fat)		Fatty fish such as salmon and trout, omega-3 eggs, canola oil, walnuts, ground flaxseed and soft, non hydrogenated margarines made with canola oil.



# The HeartSmart™ Top 10

## GINGER CARROTS AND BROCCOLI WITH SESAME SEEDS

### PREPARATION TIME:

10 minutes

**COOK TIME:** 10 minutes

**MAKES:** 6 servings

- 1 pkg (12 oz/349 g) peeled baby carrots
- 2 cups (500 mL) broccoli florets
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) soft, non hydrogenated margarine\*
- ¼ cup (50 mL) chopped red pepper
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) sesame seeds
- 2 tsp (10 mL) grated fresh ginger root
- 1 clove garlic, minced

In a medium saucepan in a small amount of boiling water, cook carrots 5 minutes. Add broccoli to saucepan and continue cooking 3 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Drain.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, melt margarine over medium heat. Sauté red pepper, sesame seeds, ginger and garlic for 3 minutes or until tender.

Add carrots and broccoli to pan and stir-fry until heated through. Season with salt and pepper.

**Nutrients per serving:** 55 calories, 1.5 g protein, 3 g fat, 1.3 g polyunsaturates, 1.1 g mono-unsaturates, 0.4 g saturates, 0 mg cholesterol, 6 g carbohydrate, 2 g fibre, 50 mg sodium, 229 mg potassium, 834 R.E. vitamin A, 25 mg vitamin C, 0.3 mcg vitamin D, 1 mg vitamin E, 25 mg calcium, 1 mg iron. Excellent source of vitamin A. Good source of vitamin C.

\* This nutrition analysis is based on using **Becel Regular Margarine**.

This and other recipes in this guide are from Becel's *Heart Healthy Living* eNewsletter. For your free subscription, visit [www.becel.ca](http://www.becel.ca).

While there's no such thing as a "miracle food," there are certain foods that everyone should try to eat more of – fruit, vegetables, legumes and whole grains. Terrific for heart health, they provide vitamins, beta carotene,\* lycopene,\* isoflavones,\* folic acid and fibre.

- 1 Broccoli.** For vitamin C, fibre, beta carotene and folic acid.
- 2 Almonds.** For fibre, calcium, vitamin E and healthy fat.
- 3 Whole grains and whole-grain breads and cereals.** For B vitamins and fibre.
- 4 Beans or legumes.** For iron, folic acid and fibre.
- 5 Sweet potatoes.** For vitamins A and C, beta carotene, potassium and fibre.
- 6 Salmon, tuna, rainbow trout.** For omega-3 fatty acids.
- 7 Spinach, kale, swiss chard.** For vitamins A and C, beta carotene, calcium, folic acid and fibre.
- 8 Oranges.** For vitamin C, folic acid and fibre.
- 9 Tomatoes.** For lycopene.
- 10 Soybeans and soy products.** For B vitamins, isoflavones, fibre and plant sterols.

\*Beta carotene, lycopene and isoflavones are antioxidants found naturally in plants. A diet rich in antioxidants has been linked with decreased risk of heart disease.

# HeartSmart™ Makeover



## Get your 5–10

Stock your fridge with vegetables and fruit. Aim to get 5–10 servings each day by working them into everyday meals: top cereal with fruit, start dinners with salad or vegetable soup, layer grilled veggies in sandwiches.



## Make salads sing

Use a healthy oil like olive or canola when you make salad dressings, and try substituting pineapple or orange juice for one-third of the oil.



## Spice it up!

Fresh herbs and spices boost flavour and colour when you reduce the fat and salt. For savoury dishes, fresh basil, rosemary and oregano make foods taste fresher, even in winter.



## Practise portion control

Use the recommended portion sizes on Page 6 as a guide, and avoid going back for seconds. If your plate seems empty, serve larger amounts of your favourite vegetables.



## Reduce the fat

Try modifying your family's favourite higher-fat recipes by substituting evaporated milk for cream, and skim milk for whole; reducing oil by one-third; using two egg whites instead of a whole egg; and using light products. Reduce your saturated fat intake by replacing butter with soft, non hydrogenated margarine.



## Snack well

To avoid trans fat, make your own cookies and muffins using soft, non hydrogenated margarine, and snack on fruit and veggies, nuts and seeds, or plain popcorn, instead of chips or candy.

# Do you practice Heart Healthy eating?

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating provides a blueprint for healthy eating. Its basic recommendations:

- Enjoy a variety of foods from each group every day.
- Choose lower-fat foods more often.

Use this handy table to see how your eating habits compare with the *Food Guide* recommendations.

Health Check makes healthy choices easier by helping you to quickly identify products that can contribute to a healthy and balanced diet. Beel margarine meets the nutrition criteria of the Heart & Stroke Foundation's Health Check program (which is based on *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*).



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ		Your Daily Servings		
		Today Date: _/ _/ _	3 Months Date: _/ _/ _	6 Months Date: _/ _/ _
<b>GRAIN PRODUCTS</b> Choose whole-grain products more often	<b>5–12</b> • 1 slice whole-grain bread, or • ½ bagel or pita, or • ½ cup (125 mL) cooked pasta or rice			
<b>VEGETABLES AND FRUIT</b> Choose dark green and orange vegetables and orange fruit more often	<b>5–10</b> • 1 medium-sized fruit or vegetable (about the size of a tennis ball), or • ½ cup (125 mL) cooked vegetables			
<b>MILK PRODUCTS</b> Choose lower-fat milk products more often	<b>2–4</b> for adults • 1 cup (250 mL) milk, or • 3" x 1" x 1" (50 g) piece of cheese (about the size of your thumb)			
<b>MEAT &amp; ALTERNATIVES</b> Choose leaner meats, poultry and fish, as well as peas, beans and lentils more often	<b>2–3</b> • 2-3 oz (50-100 g) (about the size of a deck of cards)			
<b>OTHER</b> Soft, non hydrogenated margarine, vegetable oil, sugar, jam, tea, coffee	<b>Use in moderation</b>			

For more information on recommended number and size of servings, visit *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* at [www.healthcanada.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.ca/foodguide), or consult a health care professional.

# Guide to a HeartSmart™ Lifestyle

## Maintain a healthy weight

Today, almost half of Canadians are overweight or obese. Being overweight can raise your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and put you at increased risk of heart disease and stroke. To maintain your weight, follow *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.

People who accumulate weight around their waist ("apple" shape) are at greater risk of heart disease than those who carry weight around their hips ("pear" shape). A waist measurement greater than 40" (102 cm) on a man may indicate higher health risks. Women should keep their waist measurement less than 35" (88 cm).

To maintain your weight, follow *Canada's Food Guide*, stay active and use the tips in this guide to help you watch your fat intake and control portion size.

## Calculate your BMI

The BMI (Body Mass Index) is a valid measurement of weight in relation to height. It is not recommended for use as the sole measurement of either body composition or level of fitness and should be used in conjunction with the waist circumference calculator. To calculate your BMI,



visit the Heart and Stroke Foundation website at: [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca) and search BMI.

## Be smoke free

Smoking is one of the leading causes of heart disease, stroke, cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. It's also a serious danger to those around you. But within one year of quitting, your odds of developing heart disease could be cut in half. Here are some tips for preparing to quit.

- Choose a date to stop smoking, and mark it on your calendar.
- Work up to that date by reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke each day.
- Let family/friends know you are trying to quit and ask for support.
- Ask health care providers for information on smoking-cessation techniques.

# Stay active, stay healthy

The Heart and Stroke Foundation recommends at least 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity every day to maintain good health. Regular physical activity helps to prevent or reduce high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. It can also reduce the risk of develop-

ing heart disease and stroke.

Physical activity comes in many forms to suit personal tastes and capabilities. If you choose activities you enjoy, you'll be more likely to stay active year-round. Incorporate activity\* into your daily routine – because every bit counts.

## Keep fit TIPS



- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator – start with 25 steps and increase as your fitness level rises.
- Instead of just letting your dog out into the yard, take him or her for a stroll around the block.
- Walk to the corner store – you'll meet your neighbours and enjoy some fresh air.
- If you take public transportation, hop off one or two stops before your destination and walk the rest of the way.
- Don't forget about all the activities you loved as a kid – such as bicycling, swimming, skating and cross-country skiing. These pursuits can boost your heart health and make you feel young again.

## How does your week shape up?

Fill in one square below for each 10-minute period that you are physically active each day.

Aim to colour in the top half of the chart – more if you can!

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
0:10							
0:20							
0:30							
0:40							
0:50							
0:60							

\* Before starting any exercise program, please contact your physician.

# 7 stress busters

Researchers believe there may be a connection between stress and increased blood cholesterol, higher blood pressure and a likelihood of forming blood clots.

Here are some ideas that will help you manage stress, whether you work at home or outside the home.

- 1 Get a change of scene.** Leaving your workstation or home for a short walk can help you collect your thoughts and refocus on the task at hand.
- 2 Take a humour break.** Read one of your favourite jokes or share an amusing story with a coworker or family member.
- 3 Manage your time.** Set priorities, and do essential tasks first. Make checklists to measure your progress.
- 4 Take a deep breath,** allowing your rib cage and belly to expand as you inhale. Exhale slowly. Repeat 10 times.
- 5 Watch your diet.** Excessive consumption of alcohol, caffeine, sugar, and fats limits your body's ability to deal with stress.
- 6 Share your feelings.** Call a trusted friend or family member when you need to vent.
- 7 Keep your perspective.** Create a screensaver of special places or people as a reminder of what's really important.



## BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND SPINACH SOUP

### PREPARATION TIME:

20 minutes

**COOK TIME:** 30–40 minutes

**MAKES:** 4 servings

1½ tbsp (22 mL)	soft, non hydrogenated margarine*
1	leek (pale green and white part only), sliced
2	cloves garlic, minced
¼ tsp (1 mL)	hot chili flakes
1 tsp (5 mL)	ground cumin
2 cups (500 mL)	butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced
1	small carrot, peeled and diced
4 cups (1 L)	chicken broth
2 cups (500 mL)	baby spinach leaves, coarsely chopped
¼ cup (50 mL)	chopped fresh cilantro (optional)

In a large saucepan or soup pot, heat margarine over medium heat. Add leeks and garlic. Sauté until softened and fragrant, about 3 minutes. Stir in chili flakes, cumin, squash and carrots, stirring for 1 minute. Add broth; bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer covered for 25 to 30 minutes until vegetables are tender. Stir in spinach and simmer uncovered for 2 to 3 minutes. Season to taste with hot pepper sauce and garnish with chopped fresh cilantro if desired.

**Nutrients per serving:** 116 calories, 7 g protein, 4 g fat, 1.2 g polyunsaturates, 1.5 g monounsaturates, 0.7 g saturates, 0 mg cholesterol, 15 g carbohydrate, 3 g fibre, 845 mg sodium, 634 mg potassium, 1170 R.E. vitamin A, 16 mg vitamin C, 1 mcg vitamin D, 3 mg vitamin E, 100 mg calcium, 3 mg iron. Excellent source of vitamin A, niacin and folacin. Good source of vitamin B6 and iron.

\* This nutrition analysis is based on using **Becel Light Margarine**.



# Risk factors you can Change

## High blood cholesterol levels

are a clear warning sign that you are at greater risk of heart disease. High cholesterol levels can lead to a buildup of plaque on artery walls.

### TIPS to lower blood cholesterol levels

- 1 Reduce your intake of saturated and trans fats.** Instead, choose foods with monosaturated or polyunsaturated fat from olive or canola oil or soft, non hydrogenated margarines.
- 2 Select whole grains.** Pastas, breads and cereals made from whole grains are a good source of fibre. You should get 25–35 grams of fibre per day. Emphasize soluble fibre found in oat cereals and oatmeal.
- 3 Choose leaner meats, legumes and lower-fat dairy products,** such as skim or 1% milk, and cheese with 15% or less milk fat (MF).
- 4 Exercise for at least 30–60 minutes daily.** (You can exercise for 30–60 minutes at once, or split the exercise into mini-sessions of 10 minutes each.)
- 5 Eat more fruit and vegetables.** Fruit and vegetables are chock-full of vitamins, minerals, fibre and important “phytochemicals” that may help prevent disease.
- 6 Practice moderation and portion control** and aim for a healthy weight. Eat a healthy diet based on *Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. Visit [www.healthcanada.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.ca/foodguide) for your copy.

My **CURRENT** Total Cholesterol/HDL Ratio

My **TARGET** Total Cholesterol/HDL Ratio

My **CURRENT** Total Cholesterol

My **TARGET** Total Cholesterol

This chart is an excellent way to monitor your progress. Ask your health care professional to note your cholesterol levels in the space provided.

# Talking to your doctor



Unhealthy cholesterol levels, elevated blood pressure and diabetes are all risk factors for heart disease and stroke. For most people, it's possible to control these conditions. Be sure to discuss these factors with your doctor if they affect you.

## Cholesterol

In Canada, 45% of men and 43% of women have unhealthy cholesterol levels. Lowering cholesterol by even one percentage point in a middle-aged male is linked to a 2% decrease in heart disease risk. Choose unsaturated fat over saturated fat or trans fat.

## Blood pressure

Between 20% and 25% of Canadians suffer from high blood pressure. This condition places an extra strain on the heart, thereby damaging blood vessels and increasing cholesterol. But high blood pressure doesn't always present obvious symptoms. That's why it's important to discuss your blood pressure with your doctor next time you have your annual checkup.

## Diabetes

People with type 2 diabetes are at significant risk for developing heart disease. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, it's important to manage your weight and blood sugar levels. Regular physical activity will help keep your blood sugar and blood cholesterol levels under control. Follow the advice of your health professional, and practice the healthy principles discussed in this booklet.

## YOUR CHECKUP CHECKLIST

Consider the items on this list, noting those that may pose a risk factor to you. Plan to discuss them with your physician at your next checkup.

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnic descent
- Family history (heart disease, stroke, diabetes, other diseases)
- Blood sugar control (for people with diabetes)
- Blood pressure
- Total cholesterol
  - HDL level ("good" cholesterol)
  - LDL level ("bad" cholesterol)
- Weight
- Smoking (or exposure to second-hand smoke)
- Eating habits
- Physical activity level
- Stress level

For more information on risk factors that affect you, visit [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca).



## Halibut with lemon, shallots and herbs

These flavourful fresh herb toppings are a simple way to help you get more heart healthy fish in your diet. Great on cooked vegetables, too, such as carrots, green beans and asparagus.

**PREPARATION TIME:** 10 minutes

**COOK TIME:** 8 – 12 minutes

**MAKES:** 4 servings

2 tbsp (25 mL)	soft, non hydrogenated margarine*
2 tsp (10 mL)	finely chopped shallots or fresh chives
2 tsp (10 mL)	finely chopped tarragon or dill
2 tsp (10 mL)	finely chopped fresh parsley
½ tsp (2 mL)	Dijon mustard
½ tsp (2 mL)	lemon juice
¼ tsp (1 mL)	crushed garlic
4	fillets (6 oz/175 g) halibut or sea bass

In small bowl, mix together margarine, shallots, tarragon, parsley, mustard, lemon juice and garlic until well combined. Store covered in refrigerator until ready to use.

Broil fish for 4 to 6 minutes per side until it flakes in centre with fork. Spread about 1 tbsp (15 mL) of the herb topping over each portion of fish.

**Variation:** Use chives and dill for salmon fillets or steaks. Broil salmon 4 to 6 minutes per side, until it flakes in centre with fork.

**Nutrients per serving:** 239 calories, 35.6 g protein, 9.7 g fat, 3.5 g polyunsaturates, 3.6 g monounsaturates, 1.4 g saturates, 54 mg cholesterol, 0.5 g carbohydrate, 0.1 g fibre, 117 mg sodium, 779 mg potassium, 148 R.E. Vitamin A, 1 mg Vitamin C, 0.9 mcg Vitamin D, 2.73 mg Vitamin E, 85 mg Calcium, 1.5 mg Iron.

Excellent Source of Niacin, Vitamin B6, Vitamin B12, Magnesium.  
Good source of vitamin A.

\* This nutrition analysis is based on using **Becel Regular Margarine**.



Becel is dedicated to educating Canadians about leading a heart healthy lifestyle. Supporting the educational initiatives of the Heart and Stroke Foundation forms an integral part of this commitment.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation thanks Becel in helping to make *Your Everyday Guide to HeartSmart Living* possible. The financial support received does not constitute an endorsement of the sponsor's products or services. The content of this education resource has been independently researched by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and is based on scientific evidence.

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