

## Ask the Expert:

### What is a “Heart Healthy” Lifestyle?

Written by Adina Miller, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics/ Nutrition Fitness and Health 2024

February is American Heart Month, so it is a great time to think about some things you can do to lower the risk of heart disease. Use the tips below to learn more about how to be heart healthy.

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.
  - When you are shopping, look for frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables.
- Choose whole grains.
  - Keep an eye out for labels that mention whole-wheat or whole-grain. For example whole-wheat flour, whole-grain bread or tortillas, high-fiber cereal, brown rice, quinoa and oatmeal.
- Look for healthy fats.
  - Some examples of fats to increase are olive oil, canola oil, vegetable oil, and margarine.
  - Some fats to limit include butter, lard, bacon fat, and coconut oil.
- Choose lean or “low fat” protein.
  - Examples of lean animal protein are low-fat dairy products, eggs, salmon, and skinless poultry.
  - Examples of lean plant protein are beans, unsalted nuts, and soy products like tofu.
- Try to limit salt.
  - Look for “low sodium” products.
  - Use salt-free seasoning.
  - Compare similar products to find the one lowest in sodium.
  - Limit salty snack foods.
- Move your body in ways that you enjoy. This could be jogging, playing sports, going for a walk, or weightlifting. It is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to get at least 150 minutes of exercise per week. Your heart is a muscle and frequent physical activity can help strengthen it!
  - Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.



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## Food Safety: Knives and Cutting Boards

Written by Adina Miller, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics/ Nutrition, Fitness and Health 2024

Did you know, you can use cutting boards to avoid cross-contamination? The way you do this is by having two cutting boards and using them to prepare different types of foods. One cutting board is used for fresh fruits, vegetables, and bread. The other cutting board is used for raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Keeping these two types of foods separate can help prevent the bacteria from raw meat spreading to other types of foods. Cleaning these boards after each use is important, too.



When cutting foods with a knife, it is important to be very cautious and practice knife safety. Here are some tips on how to handle a knife when preparing food:

- Limit distractions when using a knife
- When carrying a knife, keep the blade pointed down
- Always use a cutting board
- Do not leave knives near the edge of counters, tables, or in soapy water where you cannot see them
- Clean the knife as soon as you are done using it and put it away in a safe spot
- Store knives in places where the blades are covered

Sources: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/cutting-boards> , [https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/resources/Documents/knife\\_safety\\_en.pdf](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/resources/Documents/knife_safety_en.pdf) <https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.nLflZ2CDRkC4DYbhMfmSOQHaLm?w=120&h=187&c=7&r=0&o=5&pid=1.7>

### Three-Bean Chili With Chunky Tomatoes

Ingredients (4 servings)

- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil\*
- 1 Cup onion, coarsely chopped
- ½ Cup celery, rinsed and chopped
- 1 Cup green bell pepper, rinsed and diced
- 1 can (15½ oz) low-sodium black beans\*, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15½ oz) low-sodium red kidney beans\*, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15½ oz) low-sodium pinto beans\*, drained and rinsed
- 2 cans (14½ oz each) no-salt-added diced tomatoes\* with basil, garlic, and oregano
- 1 Tbsp ground cumin
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- Sour cream (optional)

#### Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 443

Protein: 22g

Carbs: 73g

Fat: 8g

#### Directions

1. Heat the oil in a pot over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Add onions to cook and stir until the onion starts to soften, about 5 minutes.
2. Add celery and green pepper. Stir another 5 minutes, until all vegetables soften.
3. Add drained and rinsed beans to pot.
4. Stir in tomatoes, cumin, and chili powder.
5. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 10-20 minutes.
6. Serve and enjoy!



\* foods included in TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/usda-foods-available-list-tefap>

Sources: <https://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov/recipe-detail.aspx?linkId=11&clid=15&rid=42&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

<https://simple-veganista.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/easy-three-bean-chili-7.jpg>

## Eating Right: Heart Healthy Foods

Written by Mary Morgan, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics/ Nutrition Fitness and Health 2024

American Heart Month highlights heart-healthy foods that are simple to add into a diet. The main groups of heart healthy foods are vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and protein-rich foods.

Some examples of vegetables to choose are leafy greens and carrots. Some examples of heart healthy fruits are bananas, oranges, grapes and prunes. The reason why fruits and vegetables are healthy for your heart is because they are high in fiber and have a lot of valuable vitamins and minerals in them. Add fruits and vegetables into your diet by making them a main side for a meal and/or eating them as snacks throughout the day!



Whole grains refer to oatmeal, whole-grain bread, and brown rice. There are nutrients in whole grains that help keep blood pressure steady, which is a good thing for your heart. If blood pressure becomes too high, too often it could lead to hypertension, which makes it harder for your heart to pump.

Choosing fat-free or low-fat dairy and protein options like low-fat cheese and yogurt can lower the total amount of fat in your diet. Low-fat and protein-rich meats are those that have a lower fat percentage or that are prepared with less added fats. High levels of fat can raise blood cholesterol levels, which can lead to clogged arteries and conditions like heart attack and stroke. The type of fat that you choose for cooking is another place where changes can be made. Try to use monounsaturated fats instead of saturated fats. Butter and coconut oil contain high levels of saturated fat, but olive oil is a good alternative as it contains high monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats compared to high saturated fats.

The heart-healthy diet also recommends to choose foods/drinks that limit sodium, added sugars, and limit alcohol. Substitutions such as low-sodium or unsweetened products are available at local grocery stores. If you struggle to find a meal plan that promotes heart-healthy eating, look into the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Diet. The diet's purpose is to decrease hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, and can be a beginning step to promoting a healthy heart. Visit this link to learn more about the DASH Eating Plan: <https://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov>

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**Sources:** <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-healthy-living/healthy-foods>, [https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.dT6fQbcyaOOocB65mhU3gwHaE\\_?w=237&h=180&c=7&r=0&o=5&pid=1.7](https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.dT6fQbcyaOOocB65mhU3gwHaE_?w=237&h=180&c=7&r=0&o=5&pid=1.7)

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This newsletter is edited by Adina Miller and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## In The News: Heart Healthy Diets May Also Help Your brain

Written by Adina Miller, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics/ Nutrition Fitness and Health 2024

In 2022, research found benefits of Heart Healthy diets that include healthy fats, leafy greens and limits on red meat and sugar. Brain health was boosted and memory loss that often comes with age was limited for those who regularly ate these heart healthy foods.

The reason for the health promoting impact of the Heart Healthy diet may be because of the way that fatty buildup in the blood vessels is limited on this diet. As can be seen, in addition to being beneficial to our hearts, the Heart Healthy lifestyle can have many important benefits to our mind too!



Sources: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/healthy-diet-brain-boosting/> , [https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.NkF7ARVjy\\_U2\\_4AA DzHSQHaEy?w=247&h=180&c=7&r=0&o=5&pid=1.7](https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.NkF7ARVjy_U2_4AA DzHSQHaEy?w=247&h=180&c=7&r=0&o=5&pid=1.7)