



Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke

How Can I Cook Healthfully?

A Healthful eating plan means more than choosing the right foods to eat. It's important to prepare foods in a healthy way. Some ways of cooking are better than others when it comes to cutting cholesterol, fat and calories. At the same time, you want to get as much nutritional value as possible.

You don't have to just give up taste or the things you love. Just learn some heart-healthy cooking techniques and you can have it all (almost)!



Stir-frying is healthful and delicious! The high temperature and constant movement of the food keep it from sticking and burning. For vegetables, poultry or seafood, use a tiny bit of peanut oil.

What are good ways to cook?

- Roast -- with a rack so the meat or poultry doesn't sit in its own fat drippings. Set at 350 degrees to avoid searing. Baste with fat-free liquids like wine, tomato juice or lemon juice.
- Bake -- in covered cookware with a little extra liquid.
- Braise or Stew -- with more liquid than baking, on top of the stove or in the oven. Refrigerate the cooked dish and remove the chilled fat before reheating.
- Poach -- by immersing chicken or fish in simmering liquid.
- Grill or Broil -- on a rack so fat drips away from the food.
- Sauté -- in an open skillet over high heat. Use nonstick vegetable spray, a small amount of broth or wine, or a tiny bit of canola oil rubbed onto the pan with a paper towel.
- Stir-fry -- in a Chinese wok with a tiny bit of peanut oil.

- Microwave -- needs no extra fat; in fact, you can drain food of fat by placing it between two paper towels while it cooks.
 - Steam -- in a basket over simmering water.
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How can I cut fat without losing taste?

- After browning, put ground meat into a strainer lined with paper towels.
 - To make gravy without fat, blend a tablespoon or cornstarch with a cup of room-temperature broth by shaking them together in a jar. Heat the rest of the broth and add the blended liquid, simmering until thick.
 - Make scrambled eggs or omelettes using only one egg yolk per portion, and add a few extra egg whites to the batch. Or use an egg substitute product.
 - Remove oils by draining canned tuna, salmon or sardines and rinsing them in water.
 - Don't overcook vegetables. Steam or bake them instead of boiling so they keep more of their natural flavors.
 - Mix creamy salad dressing with plain low-fat yogurt.
 - Use finely chopped vegetables to stretch ground poultry or meat.
 - Use herbs and spices to add flavor to foods.
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How can I learn more?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse or health care professional. Or call your local American Heart Association at 1-800-242-8721.
 - If you have heart disease, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
 - If you need help with an eating plan, ask your health care professional to recommend a registered dietitian.
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Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your doctor.
For example:

What about desserts? _____

What's a good, healthful cookbook? _____
