

Eating After Your Heart Surgery

After your heart surgery you may find that you do not feel hungry. Certain foods may not taste the same. This may be because of the surgery itself or the pills that you are taking. You need to be sure to eat foods that will supply your body with enough calories and protein to allow your body to heal and recover.

How can I give my body the calories and protein it needs?

- Eat small amounts of food throughout the day.
- Choose foods that have a lot of nutrition in a small amount of food, such as Carnation Instant Breakfast[®].
- Some good protein foods are fish, skinless poultry, Greek yogurt, soy, beans and nuts.
- Once you begin feeling hungry again you should follow a heart-healthy diet. This will help prevent more heart and blood vessel disease.

What steps should I take to eat a heart-healthy diet?

Meat

- Eat smaller servings of meat.
- Limit the amount of meat you eat to 6 ounces per day.
- Choose lean, less marbled meats.
- Trim fat off the meat.
- Remove the skin from chicken or turkey.
- Prepare meat by baking, broiling or roasting.

Dairy

- Choose low-fat dairy products such as skim milk, yogurt, cheese, or cottage cheese.
- Choose sherbet, frozen yogurt, or ice milk instead of ice cream.

Eggs

- Eat up to 3 egg yolks per week.
- Use egg substitute or egg whites when you are cooking or baking.

Added Fats

- Use unsaturated oils, like olive oil or canola oil.
- Use soft tub margarine instead of stick margarine, butter, or shortenings.
- Use low fat mayo, salad dressing, and spreads that are low in trans fatty acids.
- Choose products that have mono- or polyunsaturated fats.
- Increase omega-3 fat by adding fish to your diet.
- Use non-stick spray, stock, bouillon, wine, or water when sautéing.

Processed Foods and Desserts

- Choose low fat snack foods instead of deep-fried snacks.
- Eat smaller servings of all desserts.
- Eat fruit as a dessert.

Salt

To decrease your salt (sodium) intake, try these tips:

- Limit the amount of processed foods like packaged entrees and canned soups.
- Restrict your intake of salted or smoked meat or fish.
- Read food labels and choose products lowest in salt.
- Read food labels on low-fat items. Many times they are high in sodium.
- Limit your salt intake to less than 2000 mg per day unless your doctor has given you a different amount.

Other Tips

- Replace fatty foods with vegetables to increase the fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants in your diet.
- Cook more meals at home. Meals eaten outside the home are often higher in fat, calories and salt.

Teach Back

What is the most important thing you learned from this handout?

What changes will you make in your diet/lifestyle, based on what you learned today?

Who to Call

If you have more questions please contact UW Health at one of the phone number listed below. You can also visit our website at www.uwhealth.org/nutrition

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at: **(608) 890-5500.**

Nutrition clinics for UW Medical Foundation (UWMF) can be reached at: **(608) 287-2770.**

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Clinical Nutrition Services Department and the Department of Nursing HF#374.