

## Eating After Your Heart Surgery

After your heart surgery you may find that you do not feel hungry and certain foods may not taste the same. This may be because of the surgery itself or the medicine 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.

### Calories and Protein Needed for Recovery

- Eat small amounts of food throughout the day. Aim to eat 5-6 times daily.
- Consume protein drinks like Boost, Ensure, Premier Protein or Carnation Instant Breakfast to help meet your protein needs.
- Other good sources of protein include fish, skinless poultry, yogurt, tofu, and beans.
- Once you begin feeling hungry again you should follow a heart-healthy diet. This will help prevent further heart and blood vessel disease.

### Steps to Eating 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.
- Consider dairy alternatives like soy milk.

#### Eggs

- Limit eggs to 3 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. Fats that are liquid when sitting on the counter are often good choices.
- 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.
- Increase omega-3 fat by adding fish to your diet.
- Use non-stick spray, stock, bouillon, wine, or water when sautéing instead of butter.

#### Processed Foods and Desserts

- Choose low fat snack foods instead of deep-fried snacks.
- Eat smaller servings of desserts.
- Eat fruit as a dessert.
- Look for the Heart-Check mark on packaged food to help identify heart healthy choices.

## Salt (Sodium)

Limit salt intake to 2000 mg per day. To decrease your salt intake, try these tips:

- Limit processed foods like packaged entrees and canned soups.
- **Do not** add extra salt to food.
- Restrict your intake of salted or smoked meat or fish.
- Cook meals at home more often.
- When eating out, ask for food to be made without added salt.
- Read food labels and choose products lowest in salt.

## Other Tips

- Replace fatty foods with vegetables to increase the fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants in your diet.

## Who to Call

If you have any questions, please contact UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below.

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH)  
**(608) 890-5500**

Nutrition clinics for UW Medical Foundation (UWMF)  
**(608) 287-2770**

You can also visit our website at:  
[www.uwhealth.org/nutrition](http://www.uwhealth.org/nutrition).

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 © 8/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Clinical Nutrition Services Department and the Department of Nursing HF#374.