

your diet

your decision



Canadian eggs are part of the Heart & Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ program. Health Check™ is a national food information program developed to help consumers make healthy food choices.

*Enjoying a variety of foods is part of healthy eating. Eggs are a nutritious food and, like many foods, should be eaten in moderation. Canadian egg producer's financially support the Health Check™ education program. This is not an endorsement. For more information, please visit www.healthcheck.org.

Developed by the Registered Dietitians at Egg Farmers of Canada.

Aussi disponible en français

For more information visit us at www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca. To contact a dietitian or for general inquiries e-mail us at contactus@livingwellwithcholesterol.ca.

Table of Contents

- 4 Control cholesterol with a healthy diet
- 5 Eat less unhealthy fat
- 6 Choose healthy fats more often
- 7 Get the facts about eggs and cholesterol
- 8 The heart-healthy benefits of fibre
- 9 Make healthier food choices everyday
- 10 Understanding food labels
- 13 Confused about serving sizes?
- 14 Weekly meal planning
- 15 References



Control cholesterol with a healthy diet

Making healthy diet choices is one of the first lines of defense against high cholesterol. Some foods, especially those high in saturated and *trans* fat, can significantly increase your cholesterol levels. Other foods deliver important health benefits that can help keep your cholesterol under control.

To get the best results, you should eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of nutritious foods such as dairy products, grains, lean meats and eggs. Your diet should also be high in vegetables and fruit, and low in unhealthy fats. **Canada's Food Guide** is an excellent resource that provides helpful guidelines for healthy food choices and you'll find a copy of it in this kit.

When you combine a healthy diet with physical activity, weight loss and the decision to stop smoking, you're taking the right steps to reduce your risk of serious health problems. All it takes is a few lifestyle changes to protect your long-term health and improve your quality of life!

Learn more about active living

Wondering how to make healthy living a part of your busy day? Learn more about fitness, healthy weight loss and the benefits of not smoking in the **Get Active and Healthy for Life** booklet.

Visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca for helpful advice you can use every day.



Eat less unhealthy fat

Unhealthy saturated and *trans* fats have a dangerous effect on your blood cholesterol and can jeopardize your heart health. These fats lower your HDL (“good”) cholesterol and increase your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and triglyceride levels. This harmful combination significantly increases your risk of heart attack and stroke.

A strong link between fat and cholesterol

According to a report by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, there is a strong connection between fat and cholesterol. Every time you increase the *trans* fatty acids in your diet, your good cholesterol goes down by the same amount. And **increasing the saturated fatty acids in your diet just 1% raises your bad cholesterol levels by twice as much!** These compelling figures show how easily a diet high in unhealthy fats can put your health at risk.

Tips for cutting down on saturated and *trans* fats

- Eat fewer cookies, crackers, pastries, French fries and other processed foods.
- Choose healthy snacks such as veggies and low-fat dip, fruit, low-fat popcorn and frozen low-fat yogurt.
- Purchase leaner cuts of meat, trim visible fat from your meat and remove the skin on chicken and turkey.
- Try baking, broiling, steaming or microwaving foods instead of frying.
- Flavour your foods with herbs, spices and lemon juice instead of butter, bacon bits or high-fat sauces.

Did you know?

One large egg contains only 1.5 grams of saturated fat and has no *trans* fat. Canadian eggs meet all the criteria for the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ program, which tells you that they're an excellent choice for a healthy diet.

Choose healthy fats more often

When it comes to choosing fats, health experts consistently recommend monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats because of their beneficial effects on your cholesterol levels and heart health. Replacing the harmful saturated and *trans* fats in your diet with healthier unsaturated fats helps to lower your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels and reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Omega-3 fatty acids are heart-healthy

Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of polyunsaturated fat that has been linked to a decreased risk of heart disease. **Health Canada recommends that people of all ages include omega-3 fatty acids in their diet every day.**²

Omega-3 enriched eggs **contain 4 times more heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids than regular eggs.** Clinical trials have shown that the fatty acids in omega-3 eggs help manage heart disease by reducing the risk of blood clots and irregular heart rhythms.³ The omega-3 fatty acids are found only in the yolk of the egg so to fully benefit from it be sure to eat the whole egg.

Tips for increasing healthy fats

- Eat more fatty fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel.
- Add omega-3 eggs to your menu for a convenient and inexpensive source of omega-3 fatty acids.
- Replace butter, lard or shortening with apple sauce when you bake.
- Use unsaturated oils like canola, safflower, flaxseed, sunflower and olive oils in your salads and stir-frys.
- Enjoy pecans, walnuts, almonds and macadamia nuts in moderation because they’re high in calories.

Get the facts about eggs and cholesterol

Eggs play an important role in a well-balanced, heart-healthy diet. They are a naturally nutrient-dense food, which means that they are **high in vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients, but low in saturated fat and calories.** Eggs are also a rich source of protein that provides long-lasting energy for your body. Although eggs contain cholesterol, the nutritional benefits they offer outweigh any slight cholesterol concerns for most people.

An egg a day is ok

Several long-term clinical studies have shown that **healthy adults do not have to limit the number of eggs they consume.** Research has confirmed that there is no link between eating eggs and developing heart disease for most people.⁴ In fact, a study by the Harvard School of Public Health found that **healthy adults can eat up to one egg a day** without increasing their heart disease risk.^{5,6,*}

*An egg a day may not be appropriate for people who have diabetes or are genetically more sensitive to dietary cholesterol.

How much cholesterol is in an egg?

One large egg contains 195 mg of cholesterol. All of the cholesterol in an egg is found in the yolk. That being said, the yolk also provides the majority of the vitamins and minerals found in the egg and half of the egg’s protein. If you don’t eat the yolk, you’ll miss out on many of the egg’s nutritional benefits.

Visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca to get more facts about eggs and cholesterol.

The heart-healthy benefits of fibre

There is growing evidence to show that soluble fibre effectively lowers blood cholesterol levels, especially in people with high cholesterol.^{7,8} Soluble fibre decreases the amount of dietary cholesterol, and saturated and *trans* fats that your body absorbs. Vegetables, fruit and whole grain foods are excellent sources of soluble fibre and should be on your menu every day. Dietitians recommend that healthy men consume about 38 g fibre a day and healthy women about 25 g fibre a day from a variety of sources.

High fibre diets reduce heart disease risk

A Harvard study of 40,000 male health professionals found that people who ate a high-fibre diet had a 40% lower risk of coronary heart disease than people who ate a low-fibre diet.⁷

Increase fibre slowly

Add more fibre to your diet by gradually substituting high-fibre foods for low-fibre foods. As you increase your fibre levels, remember to drink plenty of water to keep your bowels functioning normally.

Tips for adding more fibre to your diet

- Eat whole fruits instead of drinking fruit juices.
- Switch from white rice to brown rice.
- Buy whole grain bread instead of white bread.
- Snack on raw vegetables instead of chips or chocolate bars.
- Substitute legumes (dried peas, beans, lentils) for meat, two or three times a week.
- Mix bran into yogurt for a tasty, high-fibre snack.

These foods all have fibre, so enjoy them often:

Brussel sprouts, corn, parsnips, peas, raspberries, barley, dried peas, lentils and most dried beans, yams, apples, blueberries, cranberries, oranges, pears, graham crackers, oat cakes, wild rice, bran muffins, peanut butter, bulgar, flax, wheat germ.

Visit www.livingwellwithcholesterol.ca for a full list of foods and their fibre content.

Make healthier food choices every day

Choosing fat-free* or low-fat foods** more often is one of the most important steps you can take in managing your cholesterol. Here are some suggestions to help you make healthy choices:

Instead of...	Choose...
Butter, ghee, lard or solid (hydrogenated) shortening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-hydrogenated margarines and spreads[†] • Unsaturated oils such as canola, safflower, flaxseed, sunflower and olive oils • Non-stick cooking spray • In baking, substitute unsweetened applesauce for half of the butter, shortening or oil <p><small>[†] Avoid stick margarine because it is higher in saturated and <i>trans</i> fats.</small></p>
High-fat snacks such as potato chips, chocolate bars, donuts, cookies, crackers	Low-fat alternatives such as air-popped popcorn, fresh veggies, fruit and dip, angel food cake topped with fruit slices or puddings made with low-fat milk
Full-fat sour cream	Fat-free or low-fat sour cream, fat-free or low-fat yogurt
Full-fat cream cheese	Low-fat cream cheese or cottage cheese pureed until smooth
Ice cream	Frozen yogurt, sorbets or ice milk
Oil-based salad dressings	Balsamic or other flavoured vinegars, lime juice, fat-free or low-fat dressings
Whole milk or 10% half and half cream	Skim milk, 1% milk or evaporated skim milk
Regular ground beef	Extra-lean ground beef, ground chicken or turkey
Bacon	Turkey bacon, smoked turkey or lean prosciutto

* **Fat-free foods** contain less than 0.5 g of fat per serving.

** **Low-fat foods** contain 3 g or less of fat per serving.

Understanding food labels

The nutrition information on food labels can help you make informed choices about the food you eat. Reading food labels carefully will help you:

- compare products more easily
- understand the nutritional value of the foods you eat
- increase or decrease specific nutrients in your diet (e.g. increase omega-3 fatty acids or decrease saturated fat)
- make informed food choices that are good for your health

What does a food label tell you?

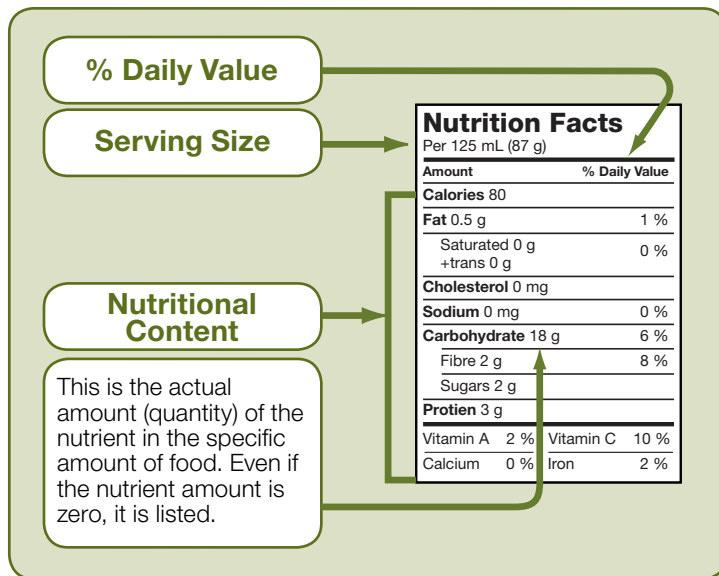
Food labels provide important information that you can use to shop wisely.

1. The Nutrition Facts table includes:

The serving size for the food product. It is usually given in measurements that you will recognize, like cups or number of pieces. Always compare the serving size on the package to the amount of food that you actually eat. Ask yourself “How many servings am I consuming?” **If you double the serving size, you double the calories and all the nutrients including fat, sugar and sodium.** Remember, the amount of food listed in the Nutrition Facts table is not a recommended serving size and is not the same as the serving sizes in *Canada’s Food Guide*.

The nutritional content of the product. It lists the number of calories and the actual amount of 13 key nutrients in each serving.

The % Daily Value for each nutrient, based on recommended amounts for a healthy diet. This tells you whether there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in one serving.



Choose foods with *less* of these ingredients (low % Daily Value):

- X Total fat, saturated fat, trans fat
- X Salt (sodium)
- X Sugar

Choose foods with *more* of these ingredients (high % Daily Value):

- ✓ Fibre
- ✓ Vitamin A and Vitamin C
- ✓ Calcium
- ✓ Iron

2. The ingredient list itemizes the ingredients used in the product by weight. The ingredient used most is listed first and the other ingredients follow in descending order. If sugar is the first item on the list, the food is high in sugar.

3. Nutrient content claims draw attention to a nutrition feature of a food (e.g. “reduced in fat”). Here are some explanations of other common nutrient content claims on food labels:

Nutrient content claim	What it means*
Cholesterol-free	less than 2 mg cholesterol, low in saturated fat, usually restricted in <i>trans</i> fat
Fat-free	less than 0.5 g of fat
Low-fat	3 g or less of fat
Low in saturated fat	2 g or less of saturated and <i>trans</i> fat combined
Free of <i>trans</i> fatty acids	contains less than 0.2 g of <i>trans</i> fatty acids
Source of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids	0.3 g or more of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids
Sodium-free	less than 5 mg of sodium
Low-calorie	40 calories or less
Calorie-reduced	at least 25% less energy than the food to which it is being compared
Source of fibre	2 g or more of fibre
Light	allowed only on foods that are reduced in fat or reduced in energy (calories)

* per serving size or reference amount.

4. Health claims highlight the relationship between diet and certain health conditions (e.g. “A healthy diet low in saturated and *trans* fats may reduce the risk of heart disease”).

Confused about serving sizes?

Manage the portions on your plate with this quick and easy chart:

Recommended serving	Approximate size
Meat and alternatives	
• 2 ½ oz (75 g) lean meat or poultry	deck of cards
• ¾ cup (175 mL) beans or lentils	small fist
• 2 tbsp (30 mL) peanut butter	ping pong ball
<i>Canada’s Food Guide</i> considers 2 eggs a serving in Meats and Alternatives.	
Grains	
• ½ cup (125 mL) pasta or rice	tennis ball
• ½ bagel (45 g) bagel	hockey puck
• ¾ cup (175 mL) cereal	small fist or cupped hand
Milk and alternatives	
• 1 ½ oz (50 g) cheese	6 dice or 2 thumbs
• ¾ cup (175 mL) yogurt	1 small single-serve container
Vegetables and fruits	
• ½ cup (125 mL) fresh, frozen or canned vegetables	baseball
• 1 cup (250 mL) salad or leafy greens	small fist
• ¼ cup dried fruits	1 large egg
• 1 piece of fruit	tennis ball
Oils and fats	
• 1 tbsp (15 mL) oil	1 thumb

For more information on healthy food choices and serving sizes, refer to the copy of **Canada’s Food Guide** provided in this kit.

Weekly meal planning

Planning your meals ahead of time is one of the most effective ways to ensure that you meet your daily nutritional needs. This will also help you to avoid the need for fast-food which may not always be the healthiest.

Meal planning tips:

- Set aside time each week to plan your week's meal and remember to check **Canada's Food Guide** for the recommended servings you need from each of the four food groups.
- Keep a shopping list in the kitchen and update it often.
- Check the Nutrition Facts table for information on serving size, nutrient content and % Daily Value the next time you are grocery shopping.
- Cook extras. Left over meats and vegetables can be part of a quick and easy meal during the week such as fajitas, casseroles, and omelettes.
- Make an extra batch of your favourite soup or pasta for the freezer and re-heat for lunch or dinner during the week.
- Stock up on vegetables and fruits. Pre-cut and separate into single servings for a quick grab-and-go snack.
- To watch portion size plan to fill at least half your plate with vegetables and fruit, one quarter with whole grains, and one quarter with meats and alternatives.

References

1. *Third report of the National Cholesterol Education Program expert panel on detection, evaluation and treatment of high blood cholesterol in adults (adult treatment panel III. Final report)*. National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. 2002. p V-8.
2. *Dietary Reference Intakes: Reference values for macronutrients*. Health Canada. 2006. Available at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/reference/table/ref_macronutr_tbl_e.html#35.
3. Kris-Etherton, PM et al. Fish consumption, fish oil, omega-3 fatty acids and cardiovascular disease. *Circulation* 2002;106;2747-2757.
4. Hu FB, et al. Dietary fat intake and the risk of coronary heart disease in women. *N Engl J Med* 1997;337:1491-9.
5. Hu FB, et al. A prospective study of egg consumption and risk of cardiovascular disease in men and women. *JAMA* 1999;281:1387-1394.
6. Qureshi AI, et al. Regular egg consumption does not increase the risk of stroke and cardiovascular diseases. *Med Sci Monit* 2007;13(1):CR1-8.
7. Rimm, EB. Vegetable, fruit, and cereal fiber intake and risk of coronary heart disease among men. *JAMA* 1996; Feb 14;275(6):447-51.
8. Brown L, et al. Cholesterol-lowering effects of dietary fiber: a meta-analysis. *Am J Clin Nutr* 1999;69:30-42.