

Food choices / Flora Project for Heart Disease Prevention.

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FACTS ABOUT FOOD

People like you are re-working the way they live. Part of that change involves their diet. They know they are well fed, but are beginning to ask 'Am I fed well?' They get enough food, but are asking if it is the right food.

Recommended dietary allowances are no longer something found in textbooks, but practical tools used by many people, as part of their everyday food choices.

People are beginning to see that they should be...

- Eating more high fibre foods like wholemeal bread and cereals, beans and pulses, fruit and vegetables.
- Cutting down on sugary foods and drinks, limiting jam, sweets, cakes, biscuits and squashes.
- Eating less fatty meat and dairy products to avoid saturated fats and trying to get more polyunsaturates in their meals.
- Reducing the amount of salt they use in cooking and at the table, realising that too much salt may be bad for their blood pressure.



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NO 3 IN A SERIES OF LEAFLETS ON PREVENTION OF HEART DISEASE



FOOD CHOICES

CAN FOODS HARM MY HEALTH?

Faced with the barrage of healthy eating articles in almost every newspaper or magazine we pick up, is it any wonder that the average consumer is often left feeling bewildered about what he should be eating? Today every shop that wants to stay in business learns fast that people are making healthier food choices. If you want to choose a healthier diet, there are a few basic rules which you need to follow about salt, sugar, fibre and fat. It's not a question of 'No, no!' but rather, 'Go slow!'.

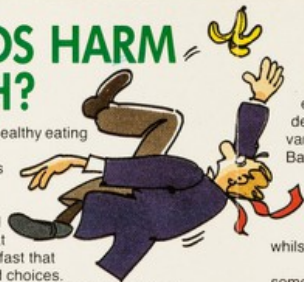
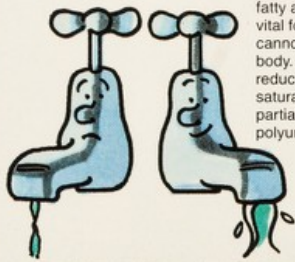
CHOLESTEROL AND HEART ATTACKS

In Western Countries, many people have fatty deposits on the inside wall of their arteries. These deposits build up over a number of years, narrowing the arteries. Sometimes the deposits can stimulate the formation of blood clots. If a clot breaks free, it can enter the circulation and sooner or later, it will become trapped and block off a blood vessel possibly causing a heart attack, or a stroke.

When researchers looked at the fatty deposits they found they contained huge amounts of a substance called cholesterol. Everyone has cholesterol in their blood, although often the amounts detected in heart disease victims are much greater. So what is the link between what you eat and the cholesterol in your blood? The answer seems to be that the amount and type of fat in your diet are crucial in determining the cholesterol level in your blood.

Food contains two main types of fat. They are called saturated and unsaturated fats. Saturated fats are the baddies, raising blood cholesterol level, while unsaturated fats, called polyunsaturates, will help to lower it.

Polyunsaturated fats also contain lots of 'essential fatty acids' like linoleic acid. As their name suggests, essential fatty acids (EFA's) are vital for health and cannot be made by the body. We should try to reduce the amount of saturated fat we eat and partially replace it with polyunsaturated fats.



WHAT CHOICES CAN I MAKE?

People like you are choosing a healthy diet and expect a good range of nutritious foods to satisfy their demands. They are starting to realise what interesting varieties of bread they can provide for their families. Bakers responded to this renewed interest and began stocking their shelves with wholemeal, granary, bran and wheatmeal. Many people are now enjoying this daily bread, spread with high polyunsaturated margarine and washed down with low fat milk, whilst realising the health benefit.

So the next time you reach out to transfer something from the supermarket shelf to your trolley — STOP. Are you being choosy enough... or is it just an old habit? Have a look at the label to see what is in it and compare it with some healthier alternatives.

Eating a healthy diet does not have to be boring, unattractive or tasteless. Quite the reverse, choosing food for health can be colourful, spicy and fun.



CUT DOWN ON THESE:

- FRIED FOODS
- CHEDDAR CHEESE, STILTON & OTHER HIGH FAT CHEESE, WHOLE MILK
- CREAM
- BUTTER, HARD MARGARINE & FATS, LARD OR SUET
- FATTY MEAT & MEAT PRODUCTS (PIES, SAUSAGES, PATES)

- WHITE BREAD, CAKES, BISCUITS, SWEETS
- SWEETENED, CANNED FRUIT IN SYRUP

CHOOSE THESE INSTEAD:

- MARGARINE, OILS & FATS HIGH IN POLYUNSATURATES
- SKIMMED OR SEMI-SKIMMED MILK, LOW FAT NATURAL YOGURT, LOW FAT CHEESE OR CHEESE ALTERNATIVES MADE WITH AN OIL HIGH IN POLYUNSATURATES, SUCH AS SUNFLOWER OIL
- MAYONNAISE ALTERNATIVES, SALAD DRESSINGS, OILS AND FATS WHICH ARE HIGH IN POLYUNSATURATES
- LEAN MEAT, POULTRY & FISH
- FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES, WHOLEGRAIN PRODUCTS
- CANNED FRUIT IN NATURAL JUICES
- GRILLED FOODS

WHICH FOODS CONTAIN MOST SATURATED FAT?

Butter, lard, dripping, suet and hard packet margarines for example, are high in saturated fat, as are most meats, especially fatty meat, and many meat products like sausages and paté.

WHICH FOODS CONTAIN MOST POLYUNSATURATED FAT?

Polyunsaturated fats are naturally found in some nuts and seeds like sunflower seeds, and in oily fish like mackerel. Margarine, oil and other products which contain a high proportion of polyunsaturated fats are clearly labelled as such. Products which are high in polyunsaturates are also low in saturated fats.