

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

Proposed publication date: Feb. 8, 2021

Content provided by: Alberta Health Services, myhealth.alberta.ca

Moving toward a heart-healthy life

Did you know that February is Heart Month? If you are trying to move toward a heart-healthy lifestyle, your journey begins in the kitchen – and by being active. Eating heart-healthy food can help lower your risk of heart disease. So can regular exercise. Here are some suggestions:

Choose higher-fibre foods, which include:

- Whole-grain foods such as breads, hot or cold cereals, crackers. Just look for “whole grain” in the ingredient list on food packages
- Whole grains such as barley, millet, quinoa, bulgur and oats.
- Dried cooked beans, peas and lentils. Use these instead of meat at some of your meals.
- Vegetables and fruits. Choose vegetables and fruits at every meal and snack.

Choose healthy fats.

- Every day, include a small amount (2 to 3 Tbsp or 30 to 45 mL) of olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, sunflower oil or soft non-hydrogenated margarines made from these oils.
- Eat fatty fish at least two times a week.
- Choose up to 1/3 cup (60 mL) of nuts as a snack, or add to a salad.
- Add ground flax, chia or hemp seeds to yogurt, hot cereals, salads or baked goods such as bread or muffins.

Be active every day.

Activity helps to lower your risk for heart disease and other diseases. It may help lower your LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, and may help increase your HDL cholesterol. Activity also makes you stronger and gives you a better quality of life.

- Be active for at least 30 minutes, five to seven days a week.
- Start with a few minutes per day, and build up to 30 minutes.



- Aim for at least 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) a week of activities that make your heart beat faster, such as brisk walking, swimming, bike riding, sports or running. You should breathe faster but still be able to talk.
- On at least two days a week, do activities to strengthen muscle and bone such as:
 - Heavy hard work
 - Lifting weights
 - Yoga

If you haven't been active for a long time, talk to your doctor about your activity plans before you start.