



HEART-HEALTHY EATING

A guide on the right food to eat for a healthier heart.

Francesca Attard Baldacchino - August 2015

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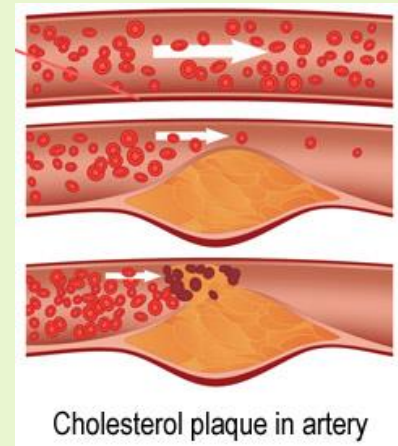
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Some Facts

- ♥ A healthy, balanced diet is crucial to avoid cardiovascular disease¹, the disease being the source of 40% of deaths in Malta in 2013.²
- ♥ Heart disease includes various conditions characterized by the build-up of **fatty deposits in the walls of arteries**. This causes the narrowing of arteries in turn limiting blood flow. This may trigger a heart attack or stroke.³



- ♥ A healthy diet AND a healthy lifestyle both help fight cardiovascular disease (CVD). One can help prevent such CVD events via lifestyle changes⁴:



Certain constituents of our diet play a major role in the development and prevention of CVD. These include:

♥ **Cholesterol⁵**- two types: **LDL is the 'bad' cholesterol**- it leads to fatty deposits in arteries, **HDL is the 'good' cholesterol**- helps remove the 'bad' cholesterol.

♥ **Fats⁶**: **Saturated ('bad' fats)**- High levels can increase cholesterol levels.

Unsaturated ('good' fats)- Help reduce cholesterol levels:

Monounsaturated fats (MUFAs) ex: Olive oil, avocados, nuts

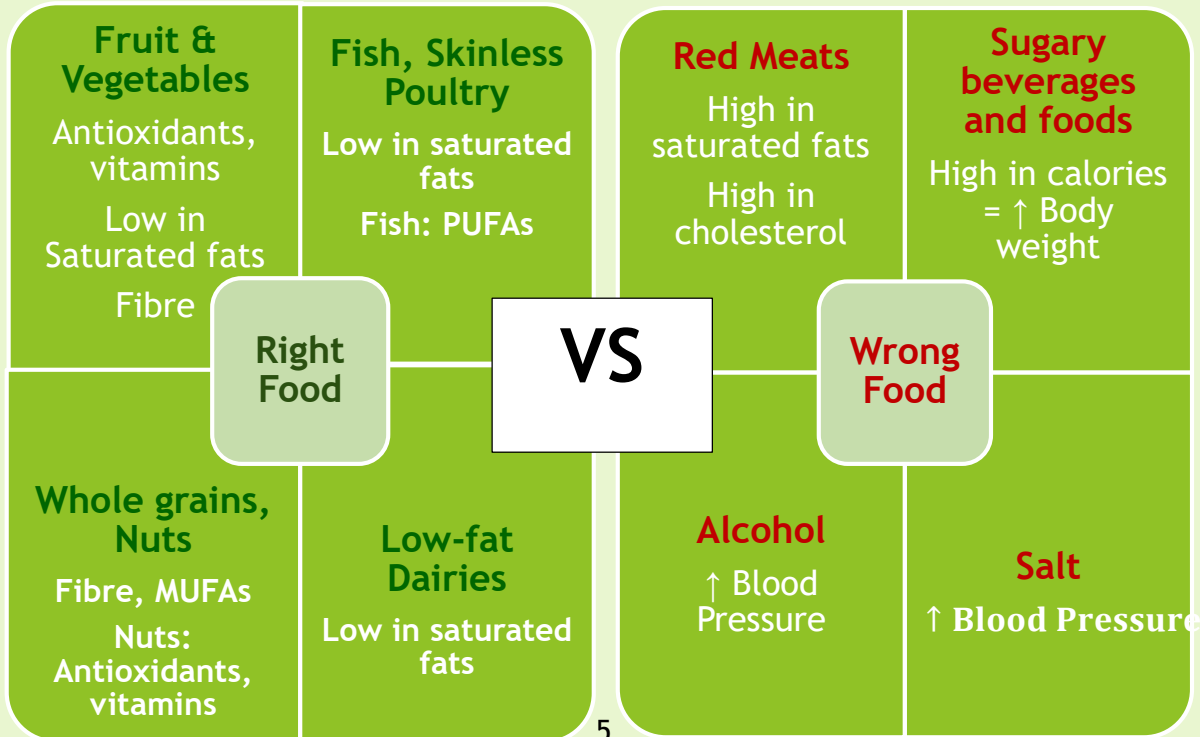
Polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs) (omega 3, 6, 9) ex: oily fish -salmon, mackerel

Trans fats: ('bad' fats): Increase the levels of the 'bad' cholesterol.



♥ **Antioxidants⁷**: Naturally occurring molecules that help prevent heart disease.

♥ **Fibre⁸**- Improves cholesterol levels and induces a feeling of fullness.



It is important to know which foods are healthy for the heart compared to others⁴:






Food examples and Food Servings⁹

Food group	Example	Number of recommended servings	Example of 1 serving for daily intake of 2000 calories
Fruit & Vegetables	All fruit and vegetables are healthy	4-5 servings per day	1 medium fruit, ½ cup fruit/ vegetable juice 
Fish¹⁰	Oily fish: Salmon, Mackerel, Herrings	Minimum of 2 servings per week	3 oz grilled fish 

Food examples and Food Servings⁹

Food group	Example	Number of recommended servings	Example of 1 serving for daily intake of 2000 calories
Whole grains	Whole grain rice, wholemeal pasta/ bread	6-8 servings per day	1 slice bread, ½ cup cereal/ cooked pasta/ rice 
Poultry, Lean meats	Chicken, Turkey	Less than 6 oz (cooked) per day	3 oz cooked meat 

Food examples and Food Servings⁹

Food group	Example	Number of recommended servings	Example of 1 serving for daily intake of 2000 calories
Low fat dairy products	Milk, Yogurt (1% or fat-free)	2-3 servings daily (adults)	1 cup milk/ yogurt 
Nuts	Almonds, peanuts, walnuts	4 servings per week	1/3 cup/small handful 
Added Sugars	Soft drinks, cakes, sweets	5 or fewer servings per week	1 Tablespoon sugar, 1 cup soft- drink 

Important tips

- ✓ Canned beans: Rinse to remove any excess salt¹¹



- ✓ Nuts: Choose unsalted/ unoiled variants or else wrap the nuts in a tissue to remove excess salt¹¹

- ✓ Whole grains: Cannot identify from the brown colour, always check the food label and search for 'whole / whole grain'.^{12*}

- ✓ Low- fat dairy products: Choose low fat cheeses, yoghurt 'light', low fat/ zero/ 0.3% fat *Benna*

milk⁴

- ✓ Salt: Avoid adding table salt to meals. Always check food labels to compare the salt content of packaged foods. ^{*13}
- ✓ Poultry: Always remove the skin from chicken/ turkey.¹³

- ✓ Fish: Speak to your doctor as you may need omega-3 supplements in addition to your dietary omega-3.¹⁰
- ✓ Fruit & Vegetables: Be colourful with your plates to take in all important nutrients. Choose canned fruit in water or natural syrup.¹⁴



***Food labels show the ingredients in a food item. It is important to read them to choose products with lowest levels of: sodium (salt), saturated fats, added sugars (fructose, dextrose, maltose, sucrose, glucose) and trans fats (partially hydrogenated oils).^{15, 16}**

Wise Choices

❖ **INSTEAD OF** Red Meats (pork, beef, lamb) **CHOOSE** Chicken, turkey, fish, beans.⁴



❖ **INSTEAD OF** White bread/ pasta/ rice **CHOOSE**

Whole grain/meal rice/ pasta/ bread.⁴

❖ **INSTEAD OF** 1 tablespoon butter **CHOOSE**

1 tablespoon soft margarine.¹⁷

❖ **INSTEAD OF** 1 egg **CHOOSE** 2 egg- whites.¹⁷

❖ **INSTEAD OF** sweets, cakes, biscuits, ice-cream

CHOOSE dried/ frozen/ fresh fruit, frozen yogurt, low-fat

ice-cream, fruit products (natural sugars).¹⁷

❖ **INSTEAD OF** soft – drinks, juices **CHOOSE** diet/ sugar-free drinks, water.⁴

Tips for Healthier Cooking¹⁸

- ❖ **Red meat:** Remove fat off the edges, choose lean meats, pour off any melted fat.
- ❖ **Poultry:** Use breasts instead of legs and thighs and remove any skin.
- ❖ **Seasonings:** Avoid salt. Instead use lemon juice, herbs, garlic, vinegar, olive oil.
- ❖ **Dressings:** Avoid butter, gravy, cream sauce.
Use olive oil, vinegar.
- ❖ **Cooking:** Do not fry- this adds more calories and fats to the meal. Use roasting, grilling, baking, poaching, steaming, stir-frying.



- ❖ **Cream:** Instead of this use low-fat/ nonfat yogurt
- ❖ **Oils:** Use non-fat cooking sprays or liquid vegetable oils (ex: olive oil, corn oil, sunflower oil) Avoid coconut oil, palm oil.
- ❖ **SUPERFOODS¹⁹:** Very healthy foods as rich in good nutrients for the heart. Some can also be used in recipes, such as:



Salmon- rich in Omega-3 and low in saturated fats



Dark chocolate- very rich in antioxidants but high in calories

Berries – very rich in antioxidants

Pumpkin- contains high levels of vitamin A, fiber and low in calories



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