

take
heart



Women's
HeartAdvantage™

Eating for a Healthy Heart

Why eat healthy?

How and what you choose to eat has a lot to do with the health of your heart. Improving your nutrition can help you manage your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and weight, thereby reducing your risk for heart disease. Healthy eating habits can also help prevent cancer and other health problems, such as bone loss (osteoporosis), as well as boost your natural defense (immune) system.

To keep your heart and body healthy, develop a diet around the following guidelines:

- Eat a variety of foods.
- Balance the food you eat with physical activity to reduce or manage your weight.
- Eat more grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Limit fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol in your diet.
- Choose foods that are low in sugar and salt.
- Moderate your alcohol intake.

Changing your diet

People's ability to change their behavior is related to the degree of stress in their lives. The more stress, the harder it is to make any kind of positive behavior change. Taking inventory of the stress in your life may be the best first step toward changing your eating habits.

Most people also need strategies and plans for making behavior changes. The goal is to change your overall diet. To do that, you'll need to get started, find the motivation to change (including overcoming barriers), maintain the changes you've made, and track your progress.

Getting started

If you are a person who has never paid much attention to what you eat, making changes to your diet or using a special diet plan that has been recommended to you may seem challenging. Or, if you are a person who has tried many different diets, you may have found it difficult to stick to diets that required drastic changes in what and how much you ate. If you are having trouble getting started, keep the following in mind:

- **Start with small changes to your diet.** Don't try to change your whole diet at once. You are more likely to be successful by making gradual changes and sticking with them.
- **Think long-term.** Eating for a healthy heart is not about making radical, short-term changes to your diet. You are learning to make healthier choices about food that will protect your heart for the rest of your life.



THE WAY YOU SHOULD BE TREATEDSM

A Solucient Top 100 Hospital[®]



- **Any positive changes you make will improve your health.** Your diet doesn't have to be an "all or nothing" affair. If you go back to old eating habits for a meal, for a day, or even for a week, doesn't mean you have failed. Just try to get yourself back on track as soon as you can.

Motivation

Getting motivated to change your diet, although hard to do, is essential. Motivation problems may have gotten in your way in the past. Try not to let bad experiences and attitudes from the past stop you from becoming motivated now.

Developing healthy new eating habits for life

- **Add something to your diet instead of taking something away.** Try to add foods that you think you need more of, like fruits and vegetables. Taking things out of your diet (for example, foods that are high in fat or sugar) may leave you feeling deprived, which may make it more difficult for you to make a change.
- **Choose more of the healthy foods that you enjoy.** Look at the foods you like (make a list) and see how you can change them to make them healthier. Is there a low-fat or low-sugar version of your favorite foods? Can you adjust your favorite recipe to reduce fat and sugar? How about using less salt on the foods you like to eat?
- **Keep track of your progress. Write down your goals.** When you reach your first goal, reward yourself! Then set a new goal. Periodically go back and check your progress. Small successes can add up quickly and make a big difference in your life.

Take care. Take charge. Take heart.

Heart disease is the #1 killer of women. It is a greater threat than all cancers combined. Since 1984, more women than men have died each year of heart disease.

Silver Cross Hospital's Women's HeartAdvantage™ Program is committed to helping women with heart disease. But while there is much a hospital, its physicians and nurses can do, we can make an even greater difference together with you. Take care of yourself. Know what your risk is. Know what your heart health indicators are. And then take charge. Choose to quit smoking, to eat better, to exercise more, and to improve your health. Because women of America, this is your life. We hope you'll put your heart into it.

For more information on Silver Cross Hospital's Women's HeartAdvantage™ Program or a referral to a Women's HeartAdvantage™ certified physician, call 1-888-660-HEAL (4325) or visit www.silvercross.org.



THE WAY YOU SHOULD BE TREATEDSM

A Solucient Top 100 Hospital[®]