

- Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables.
- Replace high-calorie foods with fruits and vegetables.
- Season vegetables with herbs and spices instead of fat, salt or high-calorie sauces.

## Fats and oils

- Avoid animal sources of fat, shortenings, palm oil and coconut oil, which are high in saturated fat.
- Choose the better fats, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Some examples include canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean or sunflower oils.
- If you need to lower your blood cholesterol, reduce saturated fat to no more than 5 to 6 percent of total calories. For someone eating 2,000 calories a day, that's about 13 grams of saturated fat.
- Choose margarines with liquid vegetable oil as the first ingredient and no more than two grams of saturated fat per tbsp.
- Avoid trans fats, which raise blood cholesterol levels and may increase risk of certain cancers. Trans fats are often found in processed baked goods such as cookies, crackers and cakes. The words "hydrogenated" or "partially hydrogenated" on the label indicate the product has trans fats.

*Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama cares about your health and wellness.*

*This is an informational series designed to provide specific ideas for a healthy and safe lifestyle.*

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## The Right Foods May Help Lower Your Cholesterol

*Half of all Americans have high cholesterol, putting them at risk for heart disease and stroke. Lifestyle changes to lower cholesterol may include eating foods low in saturated and trans fats, losing weight, if needed, and exercising 30 minutes or more on most days of the week.*



*myBlueWellness*

*A wellness program for you from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama*

*According to the American Heart Association, a heart-healthy eating plan can help you manage your blood cholesterol level and lower the risk of heart disease and stroke. Discover how easy it is to avoid saturated and trans fats while enjoying delicious foods!*

## Protein foods

- Choose skinless poultry and fish. If you choose to eat other meats, such as beef or pork, look for the leanest cuts available.
- Limit processed meats, like bacon or sausage.
- Avoid organ meats including liver, heart, chitterlings and kidney.
- Bake, broil, roast, grill, microwave or stir-fry meats instead of frying. Trim away visible fat before cooking.

## Breads, cereals, pasta and starchy vegetables

Incorporating whole grains into your family's meals is a great way to keep your body healthy. Whole grains contain additional protein, fiber, and other nutrients that are usually lost in the refining process.



It's easy to get more fiber. Just replace the foods you already eat with foods containing more fiber, such as whole-grain foods. For example:

- Instead of white bread or "wheat" bread, try "whole-wheat" bread or rye bread.
- Instead of white rice, try brown or wild rice.
- Instead of regular pasta, try whole-wheat or whole-grain pasta.
- Instead of corn flakes or crispy rice cereals, try bran flakes.
- Instead of cream of wheat, try old fashioned or quick oatmeal.
- Instead of flour tortillas, try whole-grain or corn tortillas.
- Instead of regular crackers, try popcorn.

## Milk and dairy

- Choose fat-free or low-fat milk or buttermilk.
- Non-fat and low-fat yogurt makes a great snack!
- Read the labels when choosing cheese. Choose cheeses with no more than 3 grams of fat and 2 grams of saturated fat per ounce.
- For dessert, try non-fat or low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt topped with fruit.

## Fruits and vegetables

- Aim for five to nine servings each day.
- Eat a variety of fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruits.