

# Food for Thought

February 2024

## Heart Healthy Food Choices

There are many heart healthy food choices. You may have seen heart-healthy food lists before and know that they typically include:

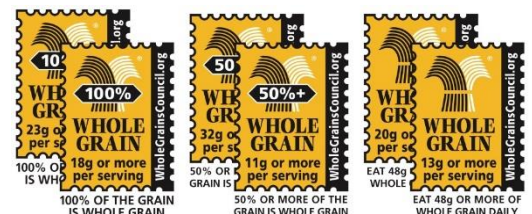
- ♥ fruits and vegetables
- ♥ whole grains
- ♥ healthy proteins (lean meats, beans, peas, and lentils)
- ♥ nonfat and low-fat dairy

Three tips to help you make heart healthy food choices:

1. **Limit saturated fat.** Saturated fats often come from higher-fat meats, higher-fat dairy, and some oils. It's recommended to get less than 20 grams of saturated fat per day.
  - ♥ Get into the habit of checking the Nutrition Facts label to see how much saturated fat is in some of your favorite foods.
2. **Lower your sodium intake.** Reducing the amount of sodium you consume is another great way to protect your heart.
  - ♥ Many food companies are making lower sodium versions of their products. You will see them labeled "low sodium" or "no salt added". Keep your eyes out for them when you are grocery shopping.
  - ♥ If you aren't sure about a specific food, check the Nutrition Facts label. Look for foods with 5% Daily Value (DV) or less for sodium.
  - ♥ Instead of seasoning your food with salt, try other herbs and spices that are low sodium choices.
3. **Increase your fiber intake.** Fiber is a key part of a healthy diet and you can find it in whole grain foods, fruits, and vegetables.
  - ♥ Look at the ingredient list for foods with a whole grain as the first ingredient.
  - ♥ Look for foods with the whole grain stamp on them.
  - ♥ Read the nutrition facts and look for foods with 20% Daily Value (DV) or more for fiber.
  - ♥ If you enjoy pasta dishes, choose whole wheat pasta. If you enjoy rice dishes, choose brown rice.



Start small by focusing on realistic changes for you. As you have success with one change look for other changes that will work for you.



## Tomato Melt

¼ cup shredded cheese (try cheddar, mozzarella or a blend)  
1 Tbsp olive oil mayonnaise  
½ tsp prepared mustard  
2 whole wheat English muffins, halved or 2 whole wheat bread slices  
1 tomato, cut into 4 slices or diced



1. Wash hands with soap and water.
  2. In a small bowl, combine cheese, mayonnaise and mustard.
  3. Spread cheese mixture evenly over English muffin halves or bread slices.
  4. Broil or toast until cheese melts, 2 to 3 minutes.
  5. Place tomatoes on each sandwich.
  6. Serve 'as-is' or broil to heat the tomato, 2 to 3 minutes.
  7. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
- For extra flavor try fresh avocado or basil leaves under the tomato or add 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder to the cheese mixture.

## Single Serving Oatmeal

½ cup quick cooking oatmeal  
Pinch of brown sugar, optional

1 Tablespoon dried fruit  
½ cup fat-free milk

1. Put oatmeal, dried fruit, and sugar in a microwave safe bowl.
2. Add dried fruit to bag.
3. Stir in milk. Microwave on High 2 ½ to 3 minutes; stir again before eating.



**Eat Smart Idaho offers FREE classes & educational events that can help limited resource individuals & families learn how to eat well for less! Ask for Eat Smart Idaho in your County.**

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai &  
Shoshone Counties 208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, &  
Nez Perce Counties 208-883-2267



To contact the Eat Smart Idaho Coordinator: Kali Gardiner, RD, LD  
Phone: 208-292-2525  
E-mail – kalig@uidaho.edu  
Web: www.eatsmartidaho.org

Sources: <https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/2022-03/FCS%20Article%2002-09-22%20Heart%20Healthy%20Treats%20For%20Valentines%20Day-CS.pdf>; <https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/health-conditions/heart-health/keep-your-heart-healthy>; <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grain-stamp>; <https://foodhero.org/recipes/category/269>; <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/snap-ed/eat-smart/recipes/single-serving-oatmeal/> retrieved 02/01/24

This work and material is supported and funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA and University of Idaho are equal opportunity providers.