¡Salud SOL!

HCHS/SOL Newsletter

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Nutrition For a Healthy Heart

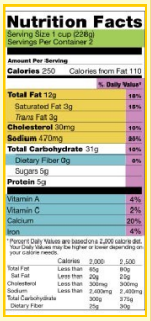
Dear SOL Participant,

The first step in a heart-healthy lifestyle is a healthy diet. Simple food choices go a long way when it comes to your heart's health. Focusing on fresh foods full of heart-healthy fats and antioxidants can lower your risk of developing heart disease and cutting your chances of a heart attack. In this newsletter you'll find information about how to read nutrition food labels and some heart-healthy diet tips.

Being a good role model is also important. As a parent you can help your kids read food labels and develop healthy habits early in life. Your kids will take notice if they see you trying to eat right. Make a game of reading food labels. Your family will learn what's good for their health and be more conscious of what they eat. Remember that being overweight is one of the main risk factors for heart disease, so exercise regularly and be sure your calorie intake is appropriate to maintain a healthy weight.

The SOL Team

Understanding Food Labels



Food labels contain information about healthfulness of the product if you know what to look for and how to interpret them. Read food labels to make healthier choices!

When you first check a label **look at the serving size**. All of the nutrition facts on the label are based on one serving of the food. Serving size is given in familiar units, such as cups, scoops or pieces. Use it to compare a serving size to how much you actually eat. A serving size is often less than a person normally eats. For example, a serving of ice cream is only about half a cup or one scoop, which is much less than most people consume in one sitting. When reading food labels, always consider how much you actually eat and multiply the calorie and fat content to figure out how much you'll actually be consuming.

For instance, in the sample label, one serving equals one cup. If you ate the whole package, you would eat two cups. That means that you're eating double the calories and nutrient numbers as shown in the sample label!

Attention SOL Youth!

Dealing with stress: Do you ever feel like the world is spinning around you at 100 miles per hour and the pressure of school, friends, and family is piling on your shoulders to the point where you just need to scream? This level of stress can be brought down with a few relaxation and breathing tips.

Breathing in through the nose for a count of three, and releasing the breath through your mouth will calm your racing mind or trembling body in a moment of high stress. The act of breathing may seem all too common, but focusing on the rhythm of your breath will be helpful before falling asleep or during a competitive sports game. When you encounter a situation that makes you anxious or tense, try closing your eyes and imagine yourself in a place that makes you truly happy. These relaxation and breathing techniques will allow you to be more focused and calm any time of the day!

Every one experience stress at times but it can become overwhelming. Reach out to an adult you can trust and seek for counseling to examine the source of your problem if you can't keep your emotions under control.

For more information: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/coping_with_stress_tips.html

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/stress.html

National Suicide Prevention hotline (800-273-8255)

Tips for a heart healthy diet

Limit saturated and trans fat

High blood cholesterol level can lead to a buildup of plaques in your arteries, called atherosclerosis, which can increase your risk of heart attack and stroke. Limiting how much saturated and trans fat you eat is an important step to reduce blood cholesterol and lower your risk of coronary artery disease. The easiest way to identify food that contains high amount of trans fat is to check the food labels. Manufacturers must now show how much trans fats they are putting into their products by law. A heart-healthy diet doesn't necessarily need to be a low-fat diet. A diet rich in monounsaturated fats can help lower cholesterol, blood pressure, and other risk factors. Monounsaturated fats are found in natural foods such as nuts, olive oil and avocados. Use these as your main sources of fat.

Limit your sodium intake to 2,300 mg a day.

If you have high blood pressure or heart problems check with your doctor because you may need to consume less sodium (salt). A diet high in sodium can lead to high blood pressure. Note that most of the sodium that people eat comes from processed foods. Cooking for yourself gives you more control over your salt intake. Reduce the amount of canned foods you eat and use fresh herbs like basil or thyme for flavor.

Enjoy fresh fruit!

Fruits and vegetables are rich in fiber and antioxidant nutrients that help protect your heart. Eat at least five servings of colorful vegetables such as carrots, peppers, and broccoli to get the daily recommended amounts of vitamins.

Foods that are high in sugar and refined carbohydrates can create sharp spikes in blood sugar and ultimately increase your risk of both heart disease and diabetes. Consume sweets and refined carbohydrates only occasionally. If you want to have a sweet treat, enjoy fresh fruit!

Increase your fiber Intake

Fiber improves your health and help reduce the risk of heart conditions. A high fiber diet will control your appetite, help you control your weight and also can help you maintain healthy cholesterol levels. Choose whole grains whenever possible. Whole grains are good sources of fiber and other nutrients that play a role in regulating blood pressure and heart health. Many studies show that the more intact the grain or seed, the slower it metabolizes, and the better it is for maintaining stable blood sugar.

You can increase the amount of whole grains in a heart-healthy diet by making simple substitutions for refined grain products. Enriched pastas, white bread and white rice are examples of refined grains, which are not as good for you. Some whole grains include barley, whole wheat, buckwheat, bulgur, millet and oatmeal. Cooked whole grains are wonderfully chewy and versatile. Make sure of getting enough of them. Legumes are fiber-rich, too. Eat more beans, peas, and lentils.

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/h_eating/h_eating.htm

http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/NFLPM/ucm274593.htm

http://www.letsmove.gov/

HCHS/SOL values your commitment to the study!

Remember to always ask for a copy of your hospital and emergency room visits record, especially if you are hospitalized or visit a doctor outside the country. This information is important for your medical records and it will help you answer our questions during the next annual follow up interview. If you didn't hear from us in the last year or want to find out if your are eligible for any of our ancillary studies call us at 1-(718) 584-1563.

Keep in touch!!

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