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G89-935 Planning for Healthy Eating (Revised November 1994)

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Planning for Healthy Eating

Dietary recommendations and tips for healthy eating are included to help reduce the risk of certain diseases.

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What is healthy eating? It's eating the types and amounts of foods that promote the best possible health for you within the limits of your environmental and genetic makeup. Healthy eating can help you maintain a desirable weight. It helps reduce the risk of heart disease, some types of cancer, and obesity.

As we do more scientific studies on healthy eating, the recommendations may be refined. It pays to be alert to new, well-documented information about what constitutes healthy eating.

The National Research Council's Committee on Diet and Health has made dietary recommendations that appear below and are directed to healthy adults and children. They contain suggestions for choosing foods that help meet their recommendations.

Knowing about healthy eating is not enough. You must practice it everyday, and that takes planning. The recommendations in this NebGuide are for the general public. When medical problems arise, you

must get advice from your doctor. For specific dietary counseling you may want to ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian or a nutritionist certified by the state.

Your Blood Pressure and Cholesterol Numbers

It is helpful to be aware of your cholesterol and blood pressure test numbers and to compare them to standard test figures. Keeping blood pressure at a normal level is important, since high blood pressure has been shown to increase the risk of stroke, heart disease and kidney failure.

Normal blood pressure numbers for an adult 18 years or older are less than 140 systolic (top number) and less than 85 diastolic (bottom number). The high-normal blood pressure diastolic range is 85 to 89.

The sodium content of your diet influences blood pressure. Lower levels of sodium intake are helpful in maintaining normal blood pressure, particularly in people who are sodium sensitive. Since sodium makes up 40 percent of salt, salt needs to be limited along with other sources of sodium.

High levels of blood cholesterol have been shown to increase the risk of heart disease. When you have a complete test of your blood cholesterol it includes total cholesterol, high density lipoproteins (HDL) and low density lipoproteins (LDL). It is good to have a *high level* of **HDL** because this is the type of cholesterol thought to protect against heart disease. A *low level* of **LDL** is desirable because it tends to deposit cholesterol in the artery walls. A table of cholesterol blood values follows.

Table I. Cholesterol blood values for adults 20 and older			
	<i>Desirable</i> mg/dl	<i>Borderline High Risk</i> mg/dl	<i>High Risk</i> mg/dl
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200	200 to 239	240 or higher
HDL Cholesterol	Higher than 35	35 or less	35 or less
LDL Cholesterol	Less than 130	130 to 159	160 or higher

Planning for healthy eating should involve all members of the family, including children. Family members need to know about choosing foods in supermarkets and restaurants, as well as preparing healthy foods at home.

Children and Cholesterol

Children under the age of two should **not** be placed on low-fat diets. They need the proper amount of fat and calories to achieve normal growth.

If a family history of high blood cholesterol is present, it is recommended that children over the age of two have their cholesterol level tested. Follow the advice of your pediatrician. Children two years of age and over can begin to eat the lower fat foods served to the adults in the family.

Dietary habits are formed at an early age. Help children acquire a taste for foods that are less fatty, sweet and salty. **Occasional** higher fat, sweet or salty foods are all right.

Cutting the Fat

Cutting the fat in your diet may help you reduce the risk of heart disease, some types of cancer and obesity. Reducing the saturated fatty acids as well as the cholesterol in foods can help lower blood cholesterol. Of the two (saturated fatty acids and cholesterol), it is the restriction of saturated fatty acids which does more to lower blood cholesterol. Saturated fatty acids tend to raise blood cholesterol levels, and unsaturated fatty acids (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) tend to lower them.

Not all the food we eat will be low-fat. Watch the portion sizes of higher fat foods carefully, and balance them with lower-fat foods.

Choosing the Types of Fats

Fats contain mixtures of three types of fatty acids -- saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. When a fat contains more of one type of fatty acid than the other two types, it may be referred to by the predominant type.

For example, a soft or tub margarine made from soybean oil contains all three fatty acids. But since the soft margarine contains more polyunsaturated fatty acids than either of the other two, it may be referred to as a polyunsaturated fat.

The American Heart Association and The American Cancer Society, as well as many other health related agencies, recommend that fats be limited to reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer.

Table II. Recommendations for daily fat intake	
Type of fatty acid	% of calories
Saturated	10%
Monounsaturated	10%
Polyunsaturated	10%
<i>(Total fat not to exceed 30 percent of daily calories)</i>	

Food Proof Your House

It is important to bring wholesome foods into your house. Limiting or eliminating foods that would be harmful temptations also is wise. The buying guide in this NebGuide provides important information on buying foods low in fat and cholesterol. Once you get them home you need to prepare them in heart-healthy, low-fat ways.

Tips for Low-Fat Cooking and Eating

- Plan on using foods with complex carbohydrates. Choose whole grain breads and cereals often. Include sources of soluble fiber such as oats, beans and barley (soluble fiber helps lower blood cholesterol level). Include generous amounts of fruits and vegetables.
- Drastically limit fried food. Most of the time choose baked potato instead of fried and broiled fish instead of fried. Remove the crust and skin from fried chicken -- eat only the lean portion.
- Use low-fat snacks such as fruit. Try some homemade low-fat (and low-salt) popcorn, and tortilla chips. Leave the extra butter and salt off the popcorn. Make the chips by cutting tortillas into

wedges and baking the wedges on a cookie sheet in a single layer. Bake for 20 minutes at 350°F, or until dry and crisp.

- Use cooking methods that enhance nutritional value while decreasing fat, such as broiling, simmering, steaming, microwaving, baking, poaching and stir-frying.
- Become a fat detective; search out fat sources and crack down on them. Skim fat from gravies, stews and soups. Trim fat from meats and remove skin from poultry before cooking. Use skim milk instead of coffee whitener which may contain saturated fat. Look for hidden sources of fat in crackers, cookies and cakes, and choose lower-fat ones.

Dietary Recommendations of the National Research Council

- Reduce total fat intake to 30 percent or less of calories. Reduce saturated fatty acid intake to less than 10 percent of calories, and the intake of cholesterol to less than 300 milligrams (mg) daily. The intake of fat and cholesterol can be reduced by substituting fish, poultry without skin, lean meats, and low- or non-fat dairy products for fatty meats and whole-milk dairy products; by choosing more vegetables, fruits, cereals and legumes; and by limiting oils, fats, egg yolks, and fried and other fatty foods.
- Every day eat five or more servings of a combination of vegetables and fruits, especially green and yellow vegetables and citrus fruits. Increase intake of starches and other complex carbohydrates.
- Maintain protein intake at moderate levels.
- Balance food intake and physical activity to maintain appropriate body weight.
- The committee does not recommend alcohol consumption. For those who drink alcoholic beverages, the committee recommends limiting consumption to the equivalent of less than one ounce of pure alcohol in a single day. This is the equivalent of two cans of beer, two small glasses of wine, or two average cocktails. Pregnant women should avoid alcoholic beverages.
- Limit total daily intake of salt (sodium chloride) to six grams (g) or less. Limit the use of salt in cooking and avoid adding it to food at the table. Salty, highly processed salty, salt-preserved, and salt-pickled foods should be consumed sparingly.

Note: Salt is about 40 percent sodium. Six grams of salt, therefore, equals about 2.4 grams or 2,325 mg of sodium. One level teaspoon of salt contains 2,132 mg of sodium.

- Maintain adequate calcium intake.
- Avoid taking dietary supplements in excess of the RDA in any one day.
- Maintain an optimal intake of fluoride, particularly during the years of primary and secondary tooth formation and growth.

The First Step in Eating Right Is Buying Right: A Guide to Choosing Low-Fat, Low-Cholesterol Foods

Variety is the spice of life. Choose foods every day from each of the following food groups. Choose different foods from within groups, especially foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol (the **Choose** column). As a guide, the recommended daily number of servings for adults is limited for each food group. But you'll have to decide on the number of servings you need to lose or maintain your weight. If you need help, ask a dietitian or your health care provider.

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts			
Servings	Choose	Decrease	Go Easy On
(equivalent of 5-7 ounces a day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean cuts of meat with fat trimmed, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> beef--round, sirloin, chuck, loin lamb--leg, arm, loin, rib pork--tenderloin, leg (fresh), shoulder (arm or picnic) veal--all trimmed cuts except ground Poultry without skin Fish, shellfish Egg whites Cholesterol-free egg substitutes Dried peas and beans, like split peas, black-eyed peas, chick peas, kidney beans, navy beans, lentils, soy-beans, soybean curd (tofu) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Prime" grade Fatty cuts of meat like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> beef--corned beef brisket, regular ground, short ribs pork--spareribs, blade roast Goose, domestic duck Organ meats, like liver, kidney, sweetbread, brain Sausage, bacon Regular luncheon meats Frankfurters Caviar, roe Foods containing egg yolk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuts and seeds Egg yolks (nor more than 4 yolks a week)
Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese			
Servings	Choose	Decrease	Go Easy On
1 serving is: 1 cup milk or yogurt 1 1/2 ounces cheddar or Swiss cheese or other natural cheeses Children, teens and adults should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skim milk, 1% milk, low-fat buttermilk, low-fat evaporated or non-fat milk Non-fat and low-fat yogurt Low-fat soft cheese, like cottage, farmer, pot Cheeses labeled no more than 2 to 6 grams of fat an ounce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaporated & condensed milk Cream, half-and-half, most non-dairy creamers and products, real or non-dairy whipped cream Cream cheese Sour cream Custard-style yogurt and ice cream Whole-milk ricotta High-fat cheeses, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2% milk and whole milk Yogurt Part-skim ricotta Part-skim or imitation hard cheese, like part-skim mozzarella "Light" cream cheese and neufchatel "Light" sour cream

only have 2-3 servings a day		like brie, Swiss, American, mozzarella, feta, cheddar, muenster	
Pregnant and nursing mothers should only have 3-4 servings a day			
Bread, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta			
Servings	Choose	Decrease	Go Easy On
(6 to 11 servings a day) 1 serving is: 1 slice bread 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, noodles or macaroni, beans 1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breads, white, whole wheat, pumpernickel, rye breads; pita; bagels; English muffins; sandwich buns, dinner rolls; rice cakes Low-fat crackers, matzo, breadsticks, rye krisp, saltines, zwieback Hot cereals, most cold dry cereals Pasta, plain noodles, spaghetti, macaroni Any grain; rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croissants, butter rolls, sweet rolls, Danish pastry, doughnuts Most snack crackers, butter crackers, those made with saturated fats Granola-type cereals made with saturated fats Pasta and rice prepared with cream, butter, or cheese sauces; egg noodles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store-bought pancakes, waffles, biscuits, muffins, cornbread
Fruit			
Servings	Choose	Decrease	Go Easy On
(2 to 4 servings a day) 1 serving is: 1 medium apple, banana, orange 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit 3/4 cup of fruit juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen, canned in light syrup or natural juice or dried fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits prepared in butter, cream sauce, or fried with saturated fats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits canned in heavy syrup

Vegetables			
Servings	Choose	Decrease	Go Easy On
(3 to 5 servings a day) 1 serving is: 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables 1/2 cup of other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw 3/4 cup of vegetable juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen, canned vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetables prepared in butter, cream sauce, fried with saturated fats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetables prepared in unsaturated vegetable oil Avocados and olives
Fats, Oils & Sweets			
Servings	Choose	Decrease	Go Easy On
Note: One teaspoon regular margarine, butter, oil or shortening = 4 to 5 grams of fat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsaturated vegetable oils: corn, olive, peanut, rapeseed (canola oil), safflower, sesame, soybean Margarine or shortening made with unsaturated fats listed above: liquid, tub, stick, diet Mayonnaise, salad dressings made with unsaturated fats listed above Low-fat dressings Low-fat frozen desserts, sherbet, sorbet, Italian ice, frozen yogurt, popsicles Low-fat cakes, angel food cake Low-fat cookies, fig bars, gingersnaps Low-fat candy, jelly beans, hard candy Low-fat snacks, plain popcorn, pretzels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butter, coconut oil, palm kernel oil, palm oil, lard, bacon fat Margarine or shortening made with saturated fats listed above Hydrogenated vegetable oil High-fat frozen desserts, ice cream, frozen tofu High-fat cakes, like most store-bought, pound, and frosted cakes Store-bought pies Most store-bought cookies Most candy, like chocolate bars Potato and corn chips prepared with saturated fat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frozen desserts, like ice milk Homemade cakes, cookies and pies using unsaturated oils sparingly Fruit crisps and cobblers Potato and corn chips prepared with unsaturated vegetable oil

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-fat beverages,carbonated drinks, juices, tea, coffee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buttered popcorn • High-fat beverages frappes, milkshakes, floats, eggnogs 	
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Adapted from "High Blood Cholesterol: Eating to Lower It" National Cholesterol Education Program

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