

New American Heart Association report supports balanced, heart-healthy dietary pattern

For nearly 100 years, the American Heart Association has worked to save and improve lives — and it's constantly keeping us up-to-date on the latest in healthy living.

The AHA recently released [a report](#) that highlights the 10 key features of a heart-healthy eating pattern. The report emphasizes the importance of dietary patterns beyond individual foods and the critical role of establishing heart-healthy dietary habits early in life. The new guidance also acknowledges systemic problems such as food insecurity and targeted marketing that may impact adhering to a heart-healthy eating pattern.

The good news is the guidance is customizable to meet personal, cultural and lifestyle preferences. It also emphasizes fresh, nutrient-dense foods while focusing on the big picture of healthy foods in our lives.

Here are some quick tips for achieving a heart-healthy eating pattern:

1. Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.
2. Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables.
3. Eat whole grains and other foods made up mostly of whole grains.
4. Choose healthy protein sources mostly from plant sources (legumes and nuts); regularly eat fish and seafood; and substitute nonfat and low-fat dairy products in place of full-fat versions. If you eat meat, choose lean cuts rather than processed forms of meat.
5. Use liquid non-tropical plant oils such as olive or sunflower oils.
6. Select minimally processed foods rather than ultra-processed.
7. Minimize intake of beverages and foods that contain added sugars.
8. Select and prepare foods with little or no salt.
9. Limit alcohol consumption; if you don't drink, don't start.
10. Apply this guidance no matter where food is prepared or consumed.

[Check out](#) our science-based tools to help discover, choose and prepare healthy meals to achieve a heart-healthy eating pattern. These Healthy for Life Educational Experiences were created by Aramark and the American Heart Association as part of our Healthy for Life® Initiative.