



Go Fishing for Heart Health

If you're a fish lover, that's good news! Research continues to prove that people who eat fish are generally healthier than those who don't, especially when it comes to heart health.

Why is fish so good?

Fish are a source of lean protein and contain low amounts of saturated fat -- the fat that can raise cholesterol levels. Fish also contains essential vitamins and minerals like zinc, magnesium and iron. Fish is rich in healthy omega-3 fats, which help reduce inflammation and protect the heart. Omega-3 fatty acids also decrease triglyceride levels, slow growth of atherosclerotic plaque and lower blood pressure.¹

So what's the dish on fish?

- **What fish should I eat?** Choose fatty fish rich in omega-3's like salmon, tuna, herring, trout, mackerel and sardines. Fish comes in more than just the fresh form. Try fish that is canned, in a pouch or even frozen.
- **How much do I need?** The American Heart Association recommends having fish at least two times a week. A serving of fish is about 3.5 ounces cooked (about the size of a checkbook), or about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of flaked fish.
- **I thought shellfish was high in cholesterol?** Certain types of shellfish have a reputation for being high in dietary cholesterol. Although this is true for some types, dietary cholesterol is not the main culprit responsible for raising blood cholesterol. Rather, it's saturated and trans fat that play a role in causing high blood cholesterol. Since shellfish are low in saturated fat, trans fat and contain beneficial compounds like omega-3's, iodine, iron and calcium, they can be included as part of a healthy diet.²
- **Isn't fish high in mercury?** Some fish contain higher mercury levels than others, and you should avoid them if you are pregnant or nursing. These include king mackerel, swordfish, tilefish and shark.

Healthy Cooking Ideas for Fish and Shellfish

- Grill, bake, broil or poach fish instead of frying. Your fish is done when it flakes easily with a fork and turns opaque.
- Instead of salting your fish, flavor it with citrus juice, zest and fresh herbs. Coat with a small amount of olive or vegetable oil instead of butter.
- Make a poaching packet: place your piece of fish on a sheet of aluminum foil, rub with a small amount of olive oil, top with diced tomatoes, thinly sliced shallots, lemon slices and dried thyme. Bake in the oven until the fish is firm and flaky.
- Serve with "light" condiments. Instead of using butter or tartar sauce try lemon, white wine or a fresh fruit salsa.
- Experiment with using fish in your family's favorite recipes like fish tacos, fish quesadillas and fish sticks.

1. Fish and Omega 3 Fatty Acids. American Heart Association. http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Fish-and-Omega-3-Fatty-Acids_UCM_303248_Article.jsp#.TwnrBtVRGSo

2. About Cholesterol. American Heart Association. http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Fish-and-Omega-3-Fatty-Acids_UCM_303248_Article.jsp#.TwnrBtVRGSo