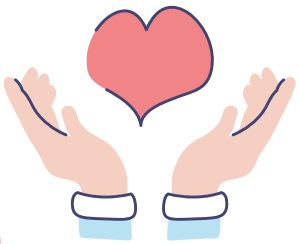
FEBRUARY NUTRITION NEWSLETTER

NUTRITION FOR HEART HEALTH

Ways to optimize your nutrition and maintain heart health



Happy Valentine's Day! This month we will be focusing on nutrition to improve heart health. What we choose to feed our bodies has a direct impact on our blood pressure, cholesterol/triglyceride levels, and blood sugars.

Remember, it's not solely nutrition that plays a role here, moving our bodies, reducing stress and getting enough sleep are just as important!

Nutrition and Blood Pressure

The amount of sodium you consume has a significant impact on your blood pressure and can contribute to hypertension.

A great place to start is to identify **common sources of sodium in your diet.** This can be done by reading the **nutrition facts** on products. Foods that are higher in sodium typically include processed foods, canned foods, frozen dinners, sauces and seasoning blends.
We can control the amount of sodium added to foods by **making meals at home, limit adding salt at the table and choosing low-sodium options when available**.
It's recommended that Canadian's consume no more than 2300 mg of sodium per day.

Nutrition Facts
Per 1 cup (250 mL)

Calories 130	% Daily Value*
Fat 4 g	5 %
Saturated 0.5 g + Trans 0 g	3 %
Carbohydrate 20 g	
Fibre 1 g	4 %
Sugars 4 g	4 %
Protein 4 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 1060 mg	46 %
Potassium 300 mg	6 %
Calcium 50 mg	4 %
Iron 1.5 mg	8 %

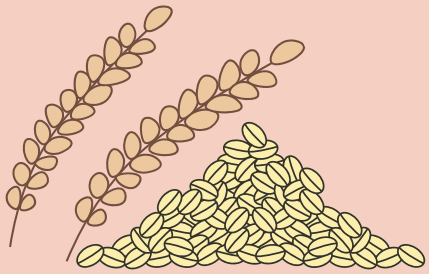
*5% or less is **a little**, 15% or more is **a lot**

If you're unsure if a packaged food is too high in sodium, take a look at the % Daily Value, try to aim for under 15% per serving.

Created by: Laila Shirzad, RD - West Champlain FHT

Nutrition and Cholesterol

Cholesterol levels have a direct impact on heart health. Managing cholesterol can be done through nutrition, physical activity and medication.
An excess intake of **saturated and trans fats** like butter, cream or animal fats can increase your cholesterol while **unsaturated fats** like olive oil, avocado, nuts can lower your cholesterol.
Another nutrient that can help reduce cholesterol levels is **soluble fiber**. This type of fiber can be found in foods like oats, flax, chia seeds or apples to name a few.
There are plenty of different strategies to optimize your nutrition in efforts to lower cholesterol.

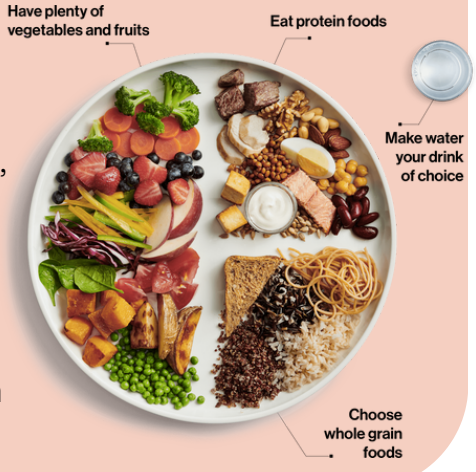


For more information on ways to manage cholesterol, check out the following resource

Alberta Health Services > Improve your Cholesterol and Triglycerides

Nutrition and Blood Sugars

Individuals with diabetes or pre-diabetes are at a higher risk of heart disease and stroke. For this reason, it's very important to ensure that blood sugars, cholesterol and blood pressure are well managed.
In efforts to regulate blood sugars, it's recommend that we follow **the balanced plate** which includes portions of starches, protein and vegetables/fruit at main meals.
This ensures we're **pairing carbohydrates with protein sources** to prevent big spikes in blood sugar.
Another way to manage blood sugars is to **incorporate more fiber into your diet**. This can be done by choosing whole grain bread, brown rice, sweet potatoes or whole wheat pasta.



For those with pre-diabetes or diabetes, it's very important to be proactive with your health. This involves regular check-ins with your diabetes educator or doctor along with regular blood work to monitor A1C.

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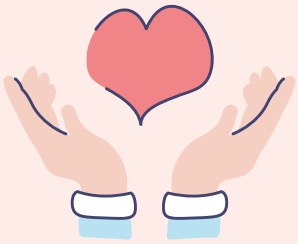
FEBRUARY RECIPE OF THE MONTH

ORANGE CARDAMOM GRANOLA

This granola recipe is a great way to add unsaturated fats, protein and soluble fiber to support heart health!



Ingredients

- 3 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 ½ cups unsalted nuts roughly chopped (almonds, pecans, walnuts)
- ⅔ cup dried fruit of your choice (cranberries, raisins, apricots)
- ½ cup pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup chia seeds
- ¼ cup ground flax seeds
- zest of 1 orange
- 3/4 cup maple syrup or honey
- 1 tbsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp ground cardamom

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350F and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper
2. In a large bowl, stir all dry ingredients (unsalted nuts, oats, dried fruit, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, ground flax seeds, cinnamon, nutmeg and cardamom)
3. Add in the zest of 1 orange and maple syrup or honey
4. Stir all ingredients together and spread them out on cookie sheet into one even layer
5. Bake for 10 minutes, toss with a spatula and return to oven for another 5-7 minutes or until golden brown
6. Remove from oven and let cool completely
7. Once completely cool, break granola apart and store in an air tight container at room temperature

Add granola to yogurt, cottage cheese, apple sauce or enjoy it with milk!

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