

# EATING FOR HEART HEALTH

## Introduction

This lesson uses health concerns around heart disease to introduce a discussion of fat in our diets. Exercise is another important component of heart health; pair this lesson with discussion points or activities from the “Exercise for Health” lesson.

## Preparation

### 1. Review the topic.

- Start with the key concepts and discussion guide. The discussion guide provides suggested questions to draw out participants’ existing knowledge as well as information you can offer in response to each question.
- Consider your participant demographics and potential interests, and conduct any additional research that may be necessary to prepare for specific questions or improve your own understanding of key concepts (see “Program Guide” for suggested resources).

### 2. Plan your lesson structure.

- Determine whether time and resources allow for a food-based activity or whether you will use an alternate activity. This lesson includes one alternate activity, and additional activity suggestions are available in the “Program Guide.”
- See “Exercise for Health” lesson for ways to incorporate physical activity into the lesson, and plan to ask participants to share their favorite ways to exercise.
- Prepare a rough timeline of your lesson and a plan to integrate discussion with the activity. Depending on available time and participant interests, you can integrate discussion topics into an activity or use discussion time to open or close the lesson.

3. **Plan how to administer pre-test** (as well as post-test if this is the final session). See “Program Guide” for details.

### 4. Prepare materials.

- Review the appropriate activity and prepare any necessary materials.
- Choose and print handouts, recipes and pre-tests.

## Suggested Recipes

*Recipes should either provide lower-fat alternatives to high-fat dishes, or emphasizes the use of olive and other plant oils as an alternative to butter or trans fat in processed baked goods and fast food.*

- Avocado Bean Salad
- Zucchini Cupcakes
- Tzatziki Dip
- Roasted Seasonal Vegetables

## Suggested Handouts

- “Choose Healthier Fats”

## Key Concepts

Fat is one of the macronutrients we need, like carbohydrates and protein. However, fat has about twice as many calories by weight as carbohydrates and protein, so eating foods with lots of fat can contribute to overweight and obesity, which put us at risk for diet-related disease. The type of fat we consume is just as important as the total amount of fat—eating higher amounts of trans fats and saturated fats can increase our risk of developing heart disease.



## Discussion Guide

*Do you know anyone dealing with high blood pressure or heart disease? What have you heard about how the fat in our diets contributes to these and other health issues?*

- Exercise and a healthy diet are both important ways to reduce your risk of heart disease.
- Excess weight puts you at risk for a variety of health issues, including heart disease. We gain weight when we eat more calories than we burn (through both exercise and daily activity), and fat has more calories per gram than carbohydrates and protein.
- Choosing healthier fats is an important part of eating to prevent dietary disease.

*Has anyone heard of the different kinds of fats? Which are healthier options? Which types of fat should you avoid? How can you tell the difference?*

- Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are healthier choices. They are found in vegetable oils, avocados, fish, peanut butter, walnuts, and some other nuts and seeds.
- **Saturated fats can raise your blood cholesterol and add lots of calories.** Watch out for them in pizza, cheese, many desserts with dairy and butter, and other foods that contain animal products like meat, butter and cheese. Coconut and palm oil also have high levels of saturated fats (and are often used in commercially-prepared desserts).
- Trans fats raise bad cholesterol and also lower “good” cholesterol. They provide no benefits for our bodies. Trans fats are processed from partially hydrogenated oil, and can be found in many processed baked goods and fried foods, as well as in vegetable shortening and some kinds of margarine.
- An easy way to differentiate between better and worse fats is to look at them: unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature, and saturated and trans fats are often solid. (This does not apply to solid foods with fat in them, like nuts.)
- You can also read food labels to see not only how much fat is in a food but what types of fat it contains.

*Should you limit your overall fat intake throughout the day? What are some strategies for reducing the amount of unhealthy fats you eat?*

- The USDA recommends that the total amount of fat in your diet not exceed 20 to 35 percent of your daily calories.
- Focus on eating healthier mono- and polyunsaturated fats in moderation, and limit the amount of saturated and trans fats you eat.
- Serve yourself smaller portions; put leftovers away so you're less tempted to eat seconds.
- Choose poultry and fish with the skin removed.
- Choose low or nonfat milk and dairy products.
- Roast, bake, grill and steam foods instead of frying them.
- Substitute applesauce for all or part of the oil in muffins and quick breads.
- Look for lean cuts of meat (look for the words “loin” or “round,” and trim off extra fat before cooking). Choose poultry and fish (which contain healthy omega-3 fatty acids) several days a week.
- Find recipes that use more beans and vegetables as substitutes for some or all of the meat—look for vegetarian chili, lentil soup, and casseroles with vegetables like carrots and broccoli. Look for vegetable oils with unsaturated or monounsaturated fat, like olive oil, canola oil, sunflower oil and safflower oil (coconut and palm oils are high in saturated fat).



## Suggested Activities

If you have access to basic ingredients and supplies, we recommend planning the lesson around a cooking demonstration or activity that will show participants concrete skills that apply the lesson concepts. If limited resources or time make a food-based activity impossible, use the alternate activity or any of the other suggested activities in the “Program Guide.”

### A. Food-Based Activity: Healthy Salad Dressing

*Making your own dressing is an easy way to reduce the overall fat in your diet and to watch what type of fats you are eating. When you mix in your own oil, you can use less oil and make sure that the oil you use is plant-based oil with unsaturated fats rather than a saturated or trans-fat oil. You could make dressings to add to a full salad (see “Sweet and Savory Salads” recipe) or bring whole-grain bread or cut vegetables for participants to dip in dressings to sample.*

**Discussion points** to address while preparing food (see discussion guide as well):

- Does anyone ever make their own dressing? Making your own dressing gives you ultimate control over the flavor and ingredients, so you can cut down on fat by using healthier plant-based oils and your favorite seasonings.
- Most vegetable oils contain unsaturated fats, which are healthier choices than saturated and trans fats.

<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixing bowl(s): one for demo, or per group</li> <li>• Mixing spoon(s): one for demo, or per group</li> <li>• Sample dishes and spoons for each participant</li> <li>• Whisks or forks to mix dressing</li> </ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start by deciding whether the activity will be a demonstration or will involve participation. If participants will be preparing food themselves, decide whether they will work alone or in groups.</li> <li>• Review “Program Guide” for tips on leading a cooking demo or guiding participants through a recipe.</li> <li>• Review ingredients and make substitutions as necessary.</li> <li>• Modify recipe as necessary, and print copies for participants to take home.</li> <li>• Slice bread and mince shallots and onions in advance, unless you have space and equipment to let participants cut vegetables themselves.</li> </ul>
<b>Ingredients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olive oil</li> <li>• Balsamic vinegar</li> <li>• Lemon juice</li> <li>• Raspberry jam</li> <li>• Maple syrup</li> <li>• Dijon mustard</li> <li>• Minced garlic</li> <li>• Diced onions</li> <li>• Pepper</li> <li>• Bread or salad ingredients (See “Sweet and Savory Salads”)</li> <li>• Salt and pepper</li> </ul>
<b>Directions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow recipe handout to combine ingredients for different types of dressings.</li> <li>• Invite participants to try different dressings by dipping bread slices, or toss dressing with salad.</li> </ul>

### B. Alternate Activity: Heart Health Bingo

<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bingo cards for each participant (or option to play in teams)</li> <li>• List of words on bingo squares</li> <li>• Optional prizes</li> </ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print enough bingo cards for every participant.</li> <li>• Make a list of words to call.</li> <li>• Optional: Develop definitions or questions to go with each word.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass out bingo cards to participants, and explain that the rules are the same as regular bingo but that the “x” and check marks in each box are reminders about which foods have healthier fats.</li> <li>• Randomly call words (or definitions/questions), giving participants time between each word to mark the appropriate space on their cards.</li> <li>• The first person to fill in a full row or column and call “bingo!” wins. Feel free to continue playing until several people have had a chance to win.</li> </ul>

# Heart-Healthy Dressings

*Making your own dressing is an easy way to reduce the overall fat in your diet and to watch what type of fats you are eating—when you mix in your own oil, you can make sure it is plant-based oil with unsaturated fats rather than a saturated or trans-fat oil.*

## INGREDIENTS

### Classic Vinaigrette:

- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- Pepper to taste
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup olive oil

### Maple Balsamic Vinaigrette:

- 1.5 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp maple syrup
- 2 tsp Dijon or stone ground mustard
- Salt & pepper (to taste)

### Shallot-White Wine:

- Make Classic Vinaigrette, replacing the red wine vinegar with white wine vinegar
- Add 1 minced shallot

### Jam Dressing:

- 1 1/2 tbsp jam
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Lemon juice (to taste)

### Lemon Balsamic:

- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- Pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup olive oil

## DIRECTIONS

Easiest method: Add all ingredients to a jar with a lid and shake to combine. For best emulsion, mix all ingredients except oil and then add oil slowly while whisking with a fork.