# Lifestyle Changes to Improve Heart Health

Eating healthy and being active can improve your heart health. A few tips below:

- ♥ Eat a variety of foods
  - Make at least half your grains the whole grain variety.
  - Choose a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables, and fill half your plate.
  - Choose lean protein, like skinless chicken or fish.  Consider including more plant-based proteins, like beans and legumes.
  - Include healthy fats such as ground flaxseed, nuts, nut butters, seeds, and avocados.

- ♥ Read the Nutrition Facts on the food label
  - Choose low-sodium products and season foods with herbs.
  - Limit foods with added sweeteners (both naturals and alternatives) like desserts and sugar-sweetened beverages.
  - Avoid foods with trans fats and limit saturated fat.
  - Limit processed meats, red meat, full fat cheeses, chips, and chicken skin. Eat foods that are high in natural dietary fiber and aim for 25-35 grams each day.

- ♥ Avoid fried foods, fast foods, and ultra-processed foods.  Prepare more foods at home and consider grilling, steaming, or baking to avoid excess calories.

- ♥ Stay hydrated, and aim for 8 glasses each day. Drink water, unsweetened tea or carbonated water.

- ♥ Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity and 2 days of muscle strengthening activity every week. A good way to tell if it is moderate-intensity is if you can talk, but not sing, while completing the activity.

- ♥ Make your steps count! Aim for 10,000 steps or about 5 miles a day. Use a pedometer, smartphone or activity log to keep track.

- ♥ Eat more mindfully. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues. Eat slower.

- ♥ Quit nicotine.

- ♥ Drink alcohol in moderation. One drink is a 12 oz. beer, 4 oz. of wine, 1 ½ oz. of 80 proof spirits or 1 oz. of 100 proof spirits.

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