

Accessorize Your Dinner Table With A Heart-Healthy Label

(NAPSA)—Whether you eat most of your meals at home or tend to grab something on the go, eating healthy doesn't have to be difficult. A good place to start is looking at the nutrition information located on the food package or provided by the restaurant, especially when you look for the American Heart Association's Heart-Check mark.

You can find the Heart-Check mark on heart-healthy foods in the grocery store or in select restaurants offering certified heart-healthy meals. In addition to looking for the Heart-Check mark when you grocery shop or go out to eat, here are some other ways you can make healthy choices.

Hints To Help You Grocery Shop

- Limit your total fat to no more than 56 to 78 grams a day, including no more than 16 grams of saturated fat, less than two grams of trans fat and less than 200 mg of cholesterol in a 2,000-calorie diet.

- Fuel up on fruits and vegetables. Your body needs vitamins and minerals to stay healthy. Give your body what it needs—4½ cups every day—to make sure your body isn't running on empty. Try one cup of fruits and vegetables at every meal and two snacks with one cup each and you'll be on your way.

- Check total calories per serving. Generally, for a 2,000-calorie diet, 40 calories per serving is considered low; 100 calories per serving is considered moderate; and 400 calories or more per serving is considered high.

- Look at the serving size and avoid consuming more than one.

Dining Out

- Avoid such extras as cocktails, bread and butter, or chips and salsa.

- Ask for butter, cream cheese, salad dressing, sauce, gravy and other condiments on the side, so you can control the quantity you consume.

- Instead of fried foods, go for baked, boiled or grilled.

- Steer clear of high-sodium foods such as those served pickled, in cocktail sauce, smoked, in broth



The Heart-Check mark is a symbol you can trust when seeking heart-healthy foods in restaurants and grocery stores.

or au jus, or in soy or teriyaki sauces.

- Be selective at salad bars. Choose fresh greens, plain vegetables without added sauces, fresh fruits and beans; steer away from cream-based or cheese dressings; and opt for healthy vegetable oil-based dressing, such as vinegar and olive oil. Limit cheeses, marinated salads, pasta salads and fruit salads with whipped cream.

- As a special treat, choose desserts and make smart choices. Fresh fruit, fruit ice, sherbet, gelatin and angel food cake are better choices.

- Instead of cream, ask for fat-free or 1 percent milk for coffee or fat-free half-and-half. Low-fat soy or almond milks may also be good choices.

- Ask your server how particular foods are prepared and what ingredients they contain.

- Ask if smaller or lunch portions are available or whether you can share entrées with a companion. If smaller portions aren't available, ask for a to-go box when you order and place half the entrée in the box to eat later.

- Ask if substitutions are possible. For example, if a dish comes with French fries or onion rings, ask whether you can get a salad with vegetables with the dressing on the side. Instead of mayon-

naise-laden coleslaw, ask if you can get fruit or vegetables instead.

Watch Out For The Salty Six

Sodium overload is a major health problem in the United States. The average American consumes about 3,400 milligrams of sodium a day, more than twice the level needed for a healthy heart.

Sodium affects not just your heart health but your appearance as well. It can make your face feel puffy, give you bags under your eyes, increase swelling in your fingers, and make your clothes look and feel tighter.

Many people may be surprised at these six popular foods that can add high amounts of sodium to your diet. Looking for the Heart-Check mark on the Salty Six is an important way to find better options in these food categories.

1. Breads and Rolls. Some foods that you eat several times a day, such as bread, add up to a lot of sodium even though each serving may not seem high.

2. Cold Cuts and Cured Meats. One 2-oz. serving—six thin slices—of deli meat can contain as much as half your daily sodium limit. Look for lower-sodium varieties.

3. Pizza. A slice of pizza with several toppings may contain more than half of the sodium you need daily for good health. Limit the cheese and add more veggies to your next slice.

4. Poultry. Sodium levels in poultry can vary greatly depending on the processing—sometimes, sodium is added to poultry during processing. Adding more salt during cooking can increase the already high levels in your bird.

5. Soup. The sodium in one cup of canned soup can be more than half the recommended intake for the whole day.

6. Sandwiches. A sandwich can contain more than 100 percent of the daily recommendations. Try half a sandwich with a side salad instead.

Learn More

Find out how foods qualify for the Heart-Check mark and see a list of certified products at www.heartcheckmark.org.