

Eat To Your Heart's Content

(NAPSA)—It's been said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. That's true for many people. It's also universal that what we eat impacts heart health.

In order to reduce your risk of heart disease—the number one killer in the U.S.—the American Heart Association recommends eating a wide variety of foods while balancing calories consumed with plenty of physical activity. The American Heart Association suggests that consumers:

- Include plenty of fruits and vegetables, which are naturally low in fat and cholesterol;
- Choose whole-grain products like oatmeal and whole-grain bread;
- Consume low-fat or fat-free dairy products; and
- Look for lean protein such as fish, skinless poultry and lean meat.

Research shows that shoppers who read labels cut nearly twice the fat from their diets as those who don't read labels. Yet reading food labels can be confusing, and time-consuming.

But there is a simple solution. Look for the American Heart Association's heart-check mark on food product packaging. The familiar red heart with the white checkmark can help you quickly and reliably identify foods that meet the American Heart Association's food certification criteria for healthy people over the age of 2.

In the kitchen, be sure to prepare foods using heart-healthy cooking techniques recommended in the Association's best-selling library of cookbooks:

- Use a non-stick skillet so you can cook with a minimum of oil, or cook with vegetable oil spray.



Heart disease is a serious problem, but taking a few tips to heart can help your heart beat the odds.

- Cut down on saturated fat in a creamy salad dressing by mixing it with nonfat or low-fat yogurt.
- Roast vegetables in a hot oven to caramelize their natural sugars and bring out the flavor.
- Grill or broil instead of frying.

To find out if your diet is “cutting the mustard,” check out the Nutrition Calculator at MyHeartWatch.org. The American Heart Association's free Web site gives users a comprehensive diet and nutrition tracker that lets them find out the exact nutritional content of specific foods and see how closely they've come to meeting nutritional goals.

You can change your dietary habits to help improve your health and reduce your risk of disease in three steps:

1. Start at the market by purchasing foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol and looking for the heart checkmark;
2. Cook using heart-healthy techniques; and
3. Monitor your progress to stay on the right track.

Heart-healthy eating has never been easier. For more information,

Note to Editors: Although March has been designated Nutrition Month, the advice in this article can help your readers any time of year.