

## Healthy eating to prevent stroke

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### Did you know?

- Eating certain foods can help protect you against stroke.
- Cutting back on salt, sugar and trans fat can decrease your risk for stroke.

### Healthy eating ...



1. Eat vegetables and fruits every day.
2. Cook more often at home and rely less on convenience foods (processed foods or take-out meals).
3. Reduce the amount of salt (sodium) in your diet.
4. Choose whole grains over white or processed grains.
5. Include healthy fats.
6. Eat a variety of protein-rich foods, limiting red meat, and avoiding processed or cured meat products.
7. Limit the amount of alcohol and sugar you have.



Make minimally processed foods (whole foods, mainly of plant origin) the basis of your diet most of the time. This handout will show you how!

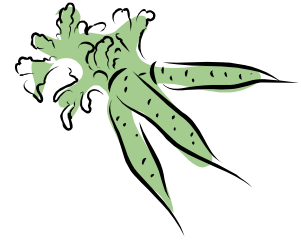
## 1. Eat vegetables and fruit every day

Eating more vegetables and fruits can reduce your risk for stroke and heart attack.



### Tips for eating more vegetables and fruits:

- Vegetables are not only for dinner! To increase the number of vegetables you eat every day try:
  - cutting up raw vegetables once a week and taking them for lunch or bringing leftover vegetables from the night before!
  - making them a part of your snacks.
  - adding vegetables to your breakfast! Peppers, onions, tomatoes, and spinach make amazing additions to omelets.
  - using hummus or low-fat dipping sauces which will add a little flavour.

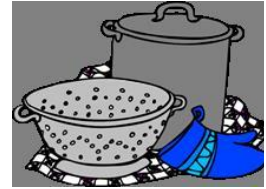


- Aim for three to four handfuls of vegetables and three small fists of fruit each day.
- Choose a colourful variety of fruits and vegetables. This will help you to get a wide range of vitamins and minerals.
- Frozen is just as good as fresh. Stock up when they are not in season and are on sale to save money.
- Choose low sodium or no added salt canned vegetables or canned fruits with no added sugar.



## 2. Cook more often at home

Cooking dinner more frequently at home helps you reduce the amount of salt (sodium), sugar and trans fat in your diet and increases the amount of fibre you eat. All of these can help you reduce your risk of stroke.



### Tips for cooking at home!

- Plan ahead for meals you will have during the week. By planning ahead you will know what you are cooking instead of ordering in last minute! It will also help you to plan your grocery shopping and stock your pantry.
- Cook big batches of soups, stews or chili on your days off and then take a welcome break from cooking on busy days.
- Cook once. Eat twice. Make more food than you need for one meal and have a second prepared meal for the next night.
- Shop for healthier convenience foods such as frozen or pre-cut vegetables, plain frozen fish fillets, shredded cheese and canned legumes (such as kidney beans, chick peas and lentils).



### Forget the cafeteria! Pack good food fast with “planned extra” leftovers for lunch

- Cook extra chicken for dinner. For lunch, wrap the chicken in soft tacos with crunchy cabbage and shredded carrots, sprinkle feta and a big squeeze of lime.
- Roast extra root vegetables. Layer them on crusty whole wheat bread with hummus and baby spinach for a delicious sandwich.
- Toss extra cooked whole wheat pasta with pesto, cherry tomatoes, lentils and small chunks of cheese for a protein packed salad.

### Grab-and-Go snacks

- Stock your kitchen with good-for-you snacks like veggies, fruit, yogurt, cheeses, hard boiled eggs, seeds and whole grain crackers.



### 3. Reduce the amount of salt (sodium)

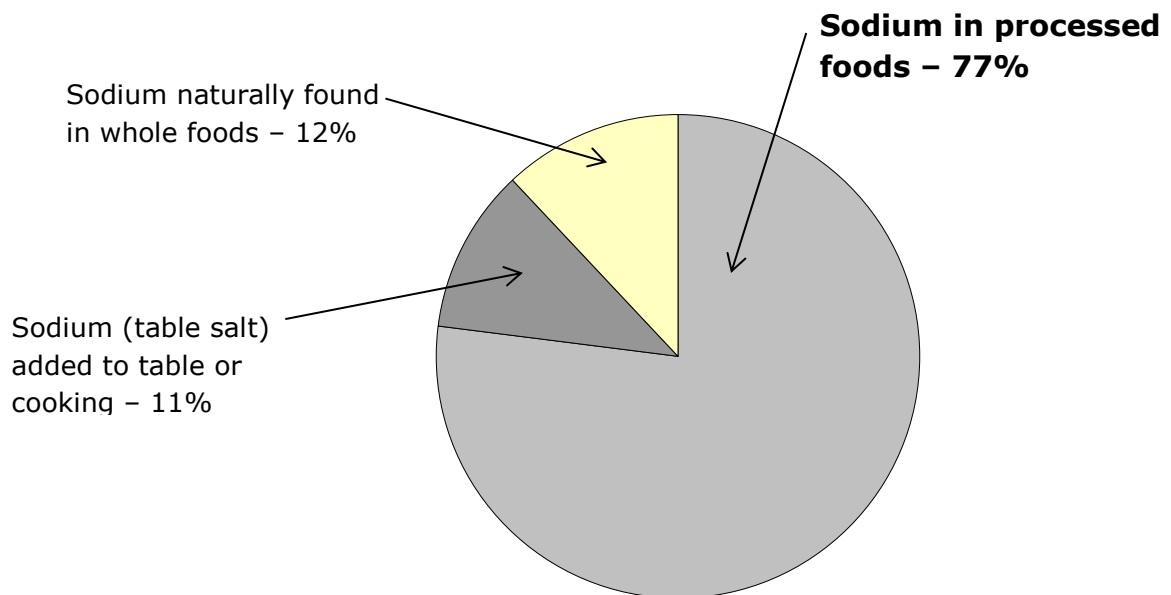
A high sodium intake can contribute to high blood pressure. Most Canadians get too much sodium in their diet.



Cooking at home and preparing meals from scratch is one of the best ways to reduce your sodium intake.

As you can see by the diagram below the majority of sodium in our diet comes from **processed foods**. By limiting processed foods and cooking at home using whole foods, you can significantly lower your sodium intake.

#### Sources of sodium in our diet



## What choices can I make to reduce the amount of sodium in my diet?

- Limit convenience or processed foods like regular canned soups, spaghetti/tomato sauce, frozen dinners, soy sauce, jarred and canned foods. Many of these items can be made at home. Choose lower sodium options.



Tomato  
One medium  
11 mg sodium



Canned Tomatoes - No Added Salt  
(1/2 cup)  
20 mg sodium



Regular Canned Tomatoes  
(1/2 cup)  
342 mg sodium

- Limit snack foods like chips, pretzels, microwave popcorn, salted nuts and crackers.
- Avoid processed and cured meats (sausage, bacon, deli meats, hot dogs, ham and pepperettes)
- Season foods more often with herbs and spices.



- Try cinnamon or allspice on baked squash or sweet potato. Experiment with seasonings, spices and vinegars.
- Lemon juice and parsley taste great on baked fish.
- Balsamic vinegar makes vegetables such as broccoli or asparagus very flavourful.
- Onion flakes, turmeric or chives are all great options as well.



## Reading the food label

Read the food label to help you choose healthier foods.

1. Read the Nutrition Facts table.
2. Look at the serving size at the top. Compare this amount to the amount that you eat.
3. Look at the milligrams of sodium. Choose foods with less sodium more often.

### Soup #1

#### Nutrition Facts

Per 250 mL

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 100	
Fat 1 g	2%
Saturated 0.4 g + Trans 0 g	2%
Cholesterol 15 mg	
Sodium 480 mg	18%
Carbohydrate 15 g	5%
Fibre 3 g	12%
Sugars 2 g	
Protein 6 g	

### Soup #2

#### Nutrition Facts

Per 250 mL

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 70	
Fat 1.5 g	2%
Saturated 0.2 g + Trans 0 g	1%
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 670 mg	28%
Carbohydrate 12 g	4%
Fibre 0 g	0%
Sugars 0 g	
Protein 2 g	

### Soup #3

#### Nutrition Facts

Per 250 mL

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 110	
Fat 2 g	3%
Saturated 0.5 g + Trans 0 g	3%
Cholesterol 15 mg	
Sodium 1000 mg	42%
Carbohydrate 16 g	5%
Fibre 1g	4%
Sugars 1 g	
Protein 6 g	



**Soup #1 is lower in sodium.**

## 4. Choose whole grains over white or processed grains

Whole grains contain more fibre, vitamins and minerals than refined processed grain products (such as white bread, white rice, white pasta). They include brown rice, quinoa, couscous, rye bread, whole grain bread, whole grain pasta, bulger, barley, buckwheat, and oats.



More fibre helps us feel full longer and this can help you reach a healthy weight. Fibre is found in vegetables and fruits as well as whole grain products.

### Tips for eating more whole grains:

- When reading the ingredient list the first item should state some type of whole grain. Look for words like “whole grain” or “whole oats”.
  - Watch for words like “enriched”, “multi-grain”, “stone ground”, and even “whole wheat”. These do not always mean whole grains are in the product.
  - If this all seems too confusing you can look at the Nutrition Facts Labels and choose grain products that contain the most fibre. This is usually a good sign the product is whole grain
  - If your family is not ready to move to a whole grain pasta yet, try using half white and half whole grain pasta when cooking.
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## 5. Include healthy fats

### Healthy fats

Do I need fats and oils in my diet?

YES. Including fats and oils will:

- give you a source of energy and help keep you feeling full between meals
- provide essential fatty acids that your body cannot make
- help your body absorb vitamins A, D, E and K.



Present research and evidence is shifting away from recommending reducing total fat in the diet.

Instead, current recommendations focus on healthy dietary pattern options such as Mediterranean-type diets that:

- emphasize vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, legumes and seeds/nuts
- include moderate amounts of dairy products
- are lower in red meat and processed meats
- limit refined grains and sugar-sweetened foods and beverages

**How can I make fats and oils part of a healthy diet?**

Healthy fats and oils come from plants and fish. Choose the majority of your fats and oils from sources such as olive oil, avocado oil and sesame oil, nuts, seeds, avocados and fish high in omega 3 fatty acids such as salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardines and herring.

Include moderate amounts of whole eggs and dairy products such as cheese, milk and yogurt.

Skip the low fat version. These processed foods are often high in refined carbohydrates and added sugar instead of fat.

Avoid trans fats in processed foods. Partially hydrogenated oils is another term for trans fats. Trans fat is found in partially hydrogenated margarines, deep fried foods (such as French fries and doughnuts) and many packaged crackers, cookies and commercially baked goods.

**Remember...**

Fat has more than twice the amount of calories by weight than carbohydrates or protein.

You can end up eating a lot of extra calories when you choose high fat foods often. Extra calories can make losing weight difficult or can cause you to gain weight.

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## 6. Eat a variety of protein rich foods

Protein is found in both animal and plant foods. Eating smaller portions of meat and less often is part of a healthy diet.

Try having “Meatless Mondays” with your family to experiment with plant-based protein sources at least one day a week. North Americans typically cover over ½ of their plate with meat. Think of meat as a side dish or flavouring and not the main event of the meal!

Cover ¼ of the plate with meat as a side dish or top a salad with protein to add flavouring.

### Plant-based protein

Choose plant-based protein foods more often.

These include legumes also called beans (such as kidney beans, lentils, and chickpeas), soy or tofu, nuts and seeds, and nut and seed butters.



By eating more plant-based proteins you can reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet, which can help improve your cholesterol levels.

**Tips for adding legumes into your diet**

- Add beans such as chickpeas, navy beans, black beans or kidney beans to any salad, pasta or rice dish.
- Make a tasty pinto bean spread. Cook chopped onion and garlic in a small amount of oil. Add one can of rinsed and drained pinto beans and 2 Tbsp (30 mL) of water. Mash all ingredients with a fork. Spread the mixture on sandwiches or use baked tortilla triangles for dipping.\*
- Try veggie burgers!
  - Mash one 19 oz (540 mL) can of black beans.
  - Mix in 3/4 cup (175 mL) cooked brown rice, 3 Tbsp (45 mL) bread crumbs and one egg (beaten).
  - For flavour add chopped onion, garlic, cumin, lemon juice, or chili powder.
  - Shape mixture into 6 burgers.
  - Bake in the oven at 350°F (180°C) for about 5 minutes on each side or until firm.
  - Add your favourite toppings and enjoy!\*
- Plan for meatless meals starting off once a week (Meatless Mondays) and build from there.  
Don't know where to start?  
Visit <http://www.meatlessmonday.com/> for ideas.

**Try using nuts and seeds to replace meat or poultry at meal times:**

- Unsalted nuts and seeds can make a nice addition to dishes such as stir fry, salad, soup or yogurt.

Natural nut and seed spreads can be added to toast, bagels, or English muffins to help make these foods part of a more balanced meal.

**Simple ways to include more plant-based proteins into your diet is by trying new recipes like:**

- Chili with kidney or pinto beans
- Split pea, lentil, minestrone, or black bean soups
- Veggie burgers
- Stir fry with tofu instead of meat
- Black bean enchiladas or burritos
- Mexican style rice and beans

**Animal based protein**

Choose animal sources of protein such as fish, poultry, dairy products, eggs, and red meat.

**Tips for getting more fish in your diet include:**



Helpful  
Tips

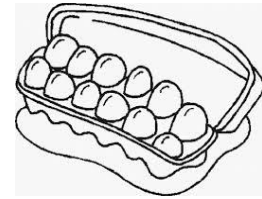
- Wrap tuna or salmon plus your favourite veggies, like shredded carrot or cabbage in a tortilla. Roll up the tortilla tightly, slice into rounds and enjoy!
- Mix mayonnaise and diced onions with canned salmon or tuna. Spoon the mixture into celery stalks for an easy snack.
- Used canned salmon to make baked salmon patties. This is a quick, easy and inexpensive way of enjoying more of this heart healthy fish.



**What about eggs?**

Nutrition information on eggs has changed with new research. New research suggests that eating one egg a day does not increase the risk for stroke or heart disease.

Eggs can be part of a healthy diet. They can be used to make quick, easy and nutritious meals.

**Tips for measuring a serving size of a protein rich food**

One serving size of:

- meat, poultry or fish is the size and thickness of the palm of your hand.
- nuts and seeds is a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup.
- nut or seed butter is 2 Tbsp.
- cheese is about the size of your thumb or a 9 volt battery.
- soy based meat alternatives and legumes is  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup.



## 7. Limit alcohol and sugar

Alcohol can increase your blood pressure and the triglyceride levels in your blood.



Here are some guidelines **but ask your doctor how much alcohol is right for you** (alcohol limits are different for people with diabetes and other conditions).

Women:

- No more than 10 drinks a week, with a limit of 2 drinks a day.

Men:

- No more than 15 drinks a week, with a limit of 3 drinks a day.

For these guidelines, “a drink” means:

- 341 ml (12 oz.) bottle of 5% alcohol beer, cider or cooler
- 142 ml (5 oz.) glass of 12% alcohol wine
- 43 ml (1.5 oz.) serving of 40% distilled alcohol

### Tips for limiting or replacing alcohol

Try non-alcoholic beverages like:

- Club soda with mint or a splash of fruit juice
- Sparkling water with a twist of lemon or lime
- Water (by itself or with added fruit or vegetables for flavouring)
- Homemade iced tea with lemon or lime juice



Avoid substituting sugar sweetened beverages such as soda pop, juice, energy drinks or chocolate milk for alcohol as they may raise blood sugar and triglyceride levels and also add unnecessary calories to your diet.

## Putting it all together

**Canada's Food Guide** - Make it a habit to eat vegetables, fruits, whole grains and protein foods

Have plenty of  
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water  
your drink  
of choice



Choose  
whole grain  
foods



**"Eat food...not too much...mostly plants".**

Michael Pollan

Moving toward a whole food, plant-based diet means that most of your food choices come from minimally processed foods, which will decrease your risk of stroke.

Keep in mind you do not have to overhaul your diet overnight. Making small realistic changes that fit into your life over time will help you develop healthy eating habits that will last.

## Resources

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada – lots of recipes here!  
[www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)

Hamilton Health Sciences Patient Education Library  
For more detailed handouts about blood fats, omega-3 fats,  
salt and more!  
[www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/patient-education-library/](http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/patient-education-library/)

UnlockFood.ca  
Where you'll find information on nutrition, food, healthy eating, and  
how to connect with a dietitian.  
1-866-797-0000, [www.unlockfood.ca](http://www.unlockfood.ca)

Canada's Food Guide  
<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-food-choices/>



Dietitians of Canada: Cookspiration  
Get fresh meal ideas to fit with your mood and schedule.  
<http://cookspiration.com/>

Pulse Canada  
Learn more about Canadian pulses, also known as lentils, dry  
peas, beans and chickpeas, and how to cook with them.  
<http://www.pulsecanada.com/>

UnlockFood.ca Vegetarian  
Want ideas on how to add variety to your protein choices?  
<https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Recipes/Vegetarian.aspx?page=3>

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## Recipes

### Tofu stir fry

- 1 454 g package extra-firm tofu, cut into ½" cubes
- 2 Tbsp + 1 Tbsp canola oil
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp brown sugar
- 6 cups shredded cabbage (mix red cabbage and baby bok choy or pre-shredded coleslaw mix)

- Blot the tofu with a paper towel
- In a large non-stick pan, heat 2 Tbsp of oil over medium heat
- Stir fry tofu until lightly brown (3 to 5 minutes)
- Sprinkle with curry powder and stir fry for another minute
- Remove to a large bowl
- Heat the remaining 1 Tbsp of oil over medium-high heat
- Stir fry onion until browned (5 to 7 minutes)
- Season with the soy sauce and brown sugar (mixed together)
- Remove to the bowl with the tofu
- Stir fry the cabbage until just hot (30 to 60 seconds)
- Toss all ingredients back into the pan and combine

Serve over cooked rice.

Serves 2

Feel free to add broccoli, carrots and/or peppers. Add to pan and stir fry for 3 to 5 minutes before adding cabbage.



### Mason jar salad

Add each ingredient to the jar:

- 1 Tbsp balsamic salad dressing
- 2 Tbsp cooked quinoa
- 2 Tbsp black beans (rinsed)
- 1 Tbsp feta cheese (or any other type of cheese)
- ½ cup red pepper (cut up)
- 2 handfuls of spinach



Put on jar lid and store in the fridge.

When ready to eat, empty contents of the jar into a large bowl with a lid. Put the lid on and shake contents until all mixed together. Empty contents onto a plate.

Enjoy.



## **Vegetarian chili**

3 medium onions, sliced (1 ½ cup)  
3 stalks celery, sliced (1 ½ cup)  
3 green peppers, sliced (1 ½ cup)  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
2 28 oz cans of tomatoes, diced  
1 15 oz can of rinsed kidney beans, black beans and chick peas  
1 14 oz can navy beans in tomato sauce  
1 cup water  
½ cup raisins  
1 Tbsp chili powder  
1 Tbsp chopped parsley  
1 bay leaf  
1 ½ tsp dried basil  
1 ½ tsp dried oregano  
½ tsp pepper

- Cook onions, celery, green peppers and garlic in olive oil until tender.
- Stir in undrained tomatoes, kidney beans, chick peas, black beans and navy beans, along with all remaining ingredients.
- Bring to a boil, reduce heat and cover.
- Simmer for 1 hour.
- Remove cover and simmer 1 hour longer.
- Remove bay leaf.

Serves 8

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## Notes:

[illegible]