

## TIPS FOR

# HEART HEALTH

Ways to use diet to help manage your cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure.

### Choose leaner meat and low-fat dairy

Cholesterol comes from the fat of animal-based foods like meat, shellfish and dairy (milk, butter, cheese, eggs). One of the best ways to manage high cholesterol is to make small changes. Choose leaner proteins such as turkey, chicken, and 90% lean red meats which are lower in cholesterol and high in nutrients. Consider switching to 1% or skim milks, using olive oil or plant-based butter instead of regular butter and choosing mozzarella or American cheese.

### Eat more heart healthy fats

Not all fats are created equal, and some fats are actually helpful for improving heart health! Some of these include plant-based fats avocado, nuts, walnuts, almonds, olives/olive oil, ground flaxseed/flaxseed oil, sunflower oil and chia seeds. These foods help increase GOOD cholesterol (HDL) and decrease bad cholesterol (LDL) in the body.

### Add two servings of fatty fish per week

Fatty fish like tuna, salmon, mackerel, herring and sardines are another source of health fats. They have omega-3 fatty acids which help to control plaque build up in your blood vessels. Consuming fatty fish regularly is an excellent way to control high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

### Include sources of fiber at every meal

Fruits, vegetables and whole grains are excellent sources of fiber. Whole grains are foods like whole wheat bread or tortillas, brown rice, or quinoa. Consuming foods high in fiber and low in sugar can improve your triglyceride levels. Some foods like beans, oatmeal, and lentils contain soluble fiber. These foods are an excellent way to lower bad cholesterol.

### Eat sources of magnesium and potassium

Magnesium and potassium are two nutrients that help to relax the walls of your blood vessels and improve high blood pressure. Foods high in these nutrients include avocado, black beans, prunes, apricots, bananas, yams, butternut squash, dark chocolate and leafy greens.

Exercise is a great way to strengthen your heart and improve heart health!

Aim for 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week.

A few keys to keeping up your exercise is to make a routine and make it fun. Some ideas include:

- Take a class with friends—Zumba, dance, etc
- Take a walk every morning or evening
- Join a sports team

#### Low-Sodium Tips for High Blood Pressure

- The recommended sodium intake for a low sodium diet is less than 1500mg/day.
- Items labeled “low sodium” are lower in salt than items labeled “reduced sodium/lightly salted”.
- Use spices instead of salt to season food.
- There is “hidden” sodium in fast food, frozen foods, canned soups, and processed meats.