



February is American Heart Month



We see lots of heart-shaped items in February. Let the red and pink boxes and drawings on cards remind you of your own heart. Respect your hard-working heart by getting regular exercise and eating healthful foods.

These foods were rated by nutrition experts* as among the “best of the best” heart-healthy foods. *Circle the ones that are part of your regular diet.*

- ♥ **Salmon** has heart-healthy omega-3 fats. You can purchase it fresh, frozen or canned. Compare prices to stretch your budget.
- ♥ **Oatmeal** is a whole-grain food that provides soluble fiber, along with minerals and vitamins. See the recipe on the back.
- ♥ **Dry beans**, such as black beans, kidney beans and other legumes, provide fiber, B vitamins and minerals. Canned beans are a convenient way to eat more beans, but canned beans are higher in sodium than the beans you soak and cook. Check out “7 Steps to Using Dry Beans” at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yff/foods/fn1701.pdf.
- ♥ **Almonds and walnuts** provide plant omega-3 fats, along with magnesium, fiber and many other nutrients. Try a small handful as a satisfying snack, or add some crunch to your favorite recipes.
- ♥ **Tuna** is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins and minerals. Shop for “water-packed” tuna for a lower-calorie addition to tuna salad sandwiches.
- ♥ **Brown rice** is a whole-grain food rich in B vitamins, fiber and minerals. Try stir-fried vegetables over brown rice.
- ♥ **Berries**, including blueberries, cranberries, strawberries and raspberries, are rich in antioxidants that help protect your body. Sprinkle yogurt with berries, or make a smoothie.
- ♥ **Carrots** are rich in fiber and beta-carotene. Beta-carotene is converted to vitamin A in your body. Shred some carrots into chili, or have baby carrots available as a quick snack.
- ♥ **Spinach** is an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. Use spinach instead of iceberg lettuce to make a power-packed salad.
- ♥ **Broccoli** provides beta-carotene, vitamin C and minerals such as potassium. Steamed broccoli adds color and nutrition to your menu.

The list also includes **sweet potatoes, red bell peppers, oranges, tomatoes, soy foods (tofu, soymilk), ground flaxseed, acorn squash, cantaloupe, dark chocolate and tea.**



Do you notice that many of the plant foods on the list are very colorful?

Aim for a variety of foods in your diet every day, not only these foods.

A piece of dark chocolate once in a while is OK, too!

* Sources: WebMD nutrition staff, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and The Cleveland Clinic

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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These delicious muffins make a tasty snack or can be part of a “breakfast” menu you can serve at any time of the day. This recipe is easy to double for larger-sized households or make extra muffins to enjoy later.

Oatmeal and Apple Muffins

- 1 c. quick-cooking oatmeal
- 1 c. buttermilk
- 1 egg, beaten
- ½ c. brown sugar, packed
- ¼ c. canola oil
- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ c. apple, diced, not peeled (about 1 small apple)
- Optional topping (1 Tbsp. sugar, ¼ tsp. cinnamon)



1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Mix oatmeal and buttermilk in a large bowl and allow to stand for 15 minutes.
3. Add beaten egg, brown sugar and oil to the oatmeal mixture.
4. In a separate bowl, mix flour, baking powder, soda, salt and cinnamon.
5. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix just until combined. (Overmixing may result in lower-quality muffins with peaked tops and tunnels.)
6. Finally, gently stir in the apples.
7. Spray muffin tins with nonstick cooking spray (or use oil to grease them).
8. Fill the muffin cups about two-thirds full of batter.
9. Sprinkle the tops with cinnamon-sugar mixture.
10. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes, until lightly browned and a toothpick comes out clean.

Makes 12 muffins. Each muffin has 160 calories, 6 grams (g) fat, 4 g protein, 24 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 230 milligrams sodium.

MENU IDEA:
 Scrambled eggs with onions and bell peppers
 Oatmeal and Apple Muffins
 Orange slices
 Low-fat or fat-free milk



I heard that I should shop for the “loss leaders” at the grocery store. What does that mean?



Loss leaders are the foods that usually are advertised on the front side (or sometimes the back) of the grocery store sales ads. The items are priced much lower than usual, and the store expects to lose money (or barely break even) on these items. The loss leaders get your attention and entice you to shop at that particular store. You might buy a lot of other items besides the loss leaders.

Be a wise shopper and stretch your food dollar by taking advantage of the loss leaders. Stock up on the items that you or your family will use. For example, if canned vegetables are the “super bargain” of the week, stock up. Their storage life is at least two years in your cupboard.

If you shop at more than one store, compare the prices of the advertised items in the sales ads. Then make a shopping list for each store based on the store’s layout. Stretch your food dollar by planning your menus using the foods that are on sale.

FoodWi\$e Tip of the Month

Oatmeal provides heart-healthy soluble fiber. Eating it regularly may help maintain or lower your blood cholesterol.

A canister of oatmeal usually is less expensive per serving than the individual packets of instant oatmeal. Be creative with your oatmeal at breakfast. Try adding a sprinkle of brown sugar and some naturally sweet fresh fruit (blueberries, apples) or dried fruit (raisins, cranberries).

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Want to learn more about heart health?
 Check out the featured heart materials at www.ndsu.edu/boomers

Contact the local office of the NDSU Extension Service for more information on food and nutrition or managing your food dollar.

