

## American Heart Association - New Dietary Guidelines for Heart Health



The American Heart Association has released new dietary recommendations, the first time in nearly 15 years. The new recommendations focus on the fact that a heart-healthy diet does not mean you have to drastically change your diet or restrict food groups but instead find a pattern that is consistent with what you enjoy and that is still heart-healthy.

According to the statement by AHA, making drastic changes in your diet suddenly is not sustainable for a long period of time. It is thus more effective to change your current dietary pattern while considering factors such as what you like to eat, what is easily available and convenient for you and what you can afford.

Most of the advice by AHA has not changed. The recommendation to eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins is still there, but this time, the guidelines emphasise dietary patterns instead of individual food items or nutrients. The new recommendations convey that it is not healthy to demonise certain foods or food groups. People should not think of food in terms of good or bad. They should instead eat what they enjoy but do it in moderation and not too frequently.

This time, the recommendations also consider the fact that more people today get prepared foods from restaurants and grocery stores or through meal kits. This needs to be considered, and people are advised to consume food and beverages that are good for their heart, regardless of whether they are prepared at home or outside.

The guidelines to focus on fruits, vegetables, and plant-based sources of protein are also consistent with a sustainable and environmentally friendly way of eating. Plant-based sources of protein can include beans, lentils, peas, nuts, tofu and seeds.

An important guideline is to limit the use of highly processed foods, including high protein drinks and protein bars. Also, carbohydrates should not be eliminated completely, but instead, people should find healthy sources of carbohydrates, from things like whole grains and beans. Avoiding unhealthy sources of carbs that are rich in salt and sugar still remains a good idea.

Overall, the goal should be to eat a heart-healthy diet that is based on foods you eat regularly and foods that you enjoy while ensuring that highly processed food is eaten within limits. It is best to choose whole grains whenever possible, and the focus should be on vegetables and fruits.

There is a range of food choices out there. The key is to find healthy food items that you enjoy and that are still good for your heart.

Source: [American Heart Association](#)

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