

Your 7-Day Cholesterol-Friendly Meal Plan

Simple meals. A practical shopping list. Habits you can repeat.

Your goal this week: make heart-friendly eating easier, one meal at a time. This is a seven-day starting plan, not a promise to lower cholesterol in seven days.

How to use your plan

- 1. Shop once, prepare twice.** Use the shopping list for one adult and the short preparation routine. Repeat favorite meals if that makes the week easier.
- 2. Adjust portions.** These are sample portions, not a calorie-controlled or individually prescribed diet. Add food or adjust amounts for your appetite, activity and nutritional needs. Snacks are optional.
- 3. Keep the pattern.** Choose oats, beans, vegetables, fruit, whole grains and unsaturated fats regularly. Replacing foods high in saturated fat can support cholesterol management. [1, 2]
- 4. Make it fit.** Use unsweetened fortified soy milk or low-fat dairy; select low-sodium canned foods and rinse beans. Increase fiber gradually if your usual intake is low.

Before you begin

For general adult education. This plan does not replace medical care or prescribed medication. Ask a clinician or registered dietitian to adapt it if you have kidney disease, diabetes requiring meal planning, food allergies or other dietary restrictions. Results vary; follow your clinician's advice on cholesterol testing.

Made for readers of **HealthyNewsArticles.com**. All meal ideas are original suggestions; this plan has not been individually assessed or endorsed by the American Heart Association.

Days 1-2

Day 1 | Start with simple staples

Breakfast - Berry-walnut oatmeal

Cook 1/2 cup dry rolled oats in 1 cup unsweetened fortified soy milk or low-fat milk. Top with 1/2 cup berries and 1 tablespoon chopped walnuts.

Lunch - Chickpea crunch bowl

Toss 3/4 cup cooked chickpeas with 1 cup chopped cucumber and tomato and 1 cup leafy greens. Add 1 teaspoon olive oil and lemon juice. Serve with 1 slice whole-grain bread.

Dinner - Salmon, brown rice and broccoli

Bake a 4-5 oz salmon fillet until cooked through. Serve with 3/4 cup cooked brown rice and 1 1/2 cups steamed broccoli, finished with 1 teaspoon olive oil.

Optional snack - Apple and almonds

1 apple plus 1 tablespoon unsalted almonds.

Day 2 | Make plants the center

Breakfast - Apple overnight oats

Refrigerate 1/2 cup rolled oats, 3/4 cup milk and 1 tablespoon chia seeds overnight. Top with 1 chopped apple and cinnamon.

Lunch - Lentil vegetable bowl

Warm 3/4 cup cooked lentils with 1 cup chopped carrots and tomato, a handful of spinach and enough low-sodium broth for your preferred consistency. Serve with 1 slice whole-grain bread.

Dinner - Tofu vegetable stir-fry

Saute 5 oz firm tofu with 1 1/2 cups bell pepper and broccoli in 2 teaspoons olive oil. Add garlic and 1 teaspoon reduced-sodium soy sauce. Serve with 3/4 cup cooked brown rice.

Optional snack - Yogurt and berries

3/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt plus 1/2 cup berries.

Days 3-4

Day 3 | Build a better lunch

Breakfast - Avocado toast and yogurt

Spread 1/4 avocado on 2 slices whole-grain toast; add tomato. Serve with 3/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt.

Lunch - White bean quinoa salad

Mix 3/4 cup cooked white beans, 1/2 cup cooked quinoa, 1 cup cucumber and tomato, lemon juice and 1 teaspoon olive oil.

Dinner - Chicken with sweet potato

Bake 4-5 oz skinless chicken breast with herbs. Serve with 1 medium baked sweet potato and 1 1/2 cups green beans, dressed with 1 teaspoon olive oil.

Optional snack - Pear and walnuts

1 pear plus 1 tablespoon chopped walnuts.

Day 4 | Keep fiber on the menu

Breakfast - Banana peanut oatmeal

Cook 1/2 cup dry oats with 1 cup milk. Top with 1 small banana and 1 tablespoon peanut butter with no added sugar.

Lunch - Hummus chickpea wrap

Fill 1 whole-grain tortilla with 1/4 cup hummus, 1/2 cup chickpeas and 1 cup shredded carrots, cucumber and greens.

Dinner - Lentil tomato pasta

Warm 3/4 cup cooked lentils with 1/2 cup no-salt-added crushed tomatoes, garlic and herbs. Spoon over 1 cup cooked whole-wheat pasta. Serve with 1 cup leafy greens and 1 teaspoon olive oil.

Optional snack - Orange and almonds

1 orange plus 1 tablespoon unsalted almonds.

Days 5-6

Day 5 | Repeat what works

Breakfast - Berry oat yogurt bowl

Mix 3/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt with 1/3 cup rolled oats, 1/2 cup berries and 1 tablespoon chia seeds. Let soften before eating.

Lunch - Chickpea avocado toast

Mash 3/4 cup chickpeas with 1/4 avocado and lemon juice. Serve on 2 slices whole-grain bread with 1 cup cucumber and tomato.

Dinner - Lemon salmon and quinoa

Bake 4-5 oz salmon with lemon and herbs. Serve with 3/4 cup cooked quinoa and 1 1/2 cups broccoli or green beans, with 1 teaspoon olive oil.

Optional snack - Apple and peanut butter

1 apple with 1 tablespoon peanut butter.

Day 6 | Try a colorful bowl

Breakfast - Pear-walnut oatmeal

Cook 1/2 cup dry oats with 1 cup milk. Top with 1 chopped pear and 1 tablespoon walnuts.

Lunch - Black bean rice bowl

Combine 3/4 cup black beans, 1/2 cup cooked brown rice, 1/2 cup corn, 1/2 cup chopped tomato and 1/4 avocado. Season with lime and cumin.

Dinner - Tofu and vegetable tray bake

Roast 5 oz cubed firm tofu with 1 1/2 cups chopped carrot, bell pepper and broccoli, using 2 teaspoons olive oil. Serve with 3/4 cup cooked quinoa.

Optional snack - Yogurt and berries

3/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt with 1/2 cup berries.

Day 7 + your prep routine

Day 7 | Set up your next week

Breakfast - Peanut butter banana toast

Spread 1 tablespoon peanut butter over 2 slices whole-grain toast. Top with 1 small banana. Serve with 1 cup milk.

Lunch - White bean vegetable soup

Simmer 3/4 cup white beans with 1 cup carrots and tomato, a handful of spinach and low-sodium broth. Serve with 1 slice whole-grain bread.

Dinner - Chickpea sweet potato bowl

Combine 3/4 cup chickpeas, 1/2 cup cooked quinoa and 1 medium baked sweet potato. Add 1 cup leafy greens, lemon juice and 1 teaspoon olive oil.

Optional snack - Orange and walnuts

1 orange plus 1 tablespoon chopped walnuts.

A little preparation goes a long way

Before day 1: Cook rice and lentils for the first few days. Wash vegetables, portion nuts and mix overnight oats. Use canned beans to save time.

Midweek: Cook quinoa and prepare the remaining vegetables. Freeze portions intended for later in the week; do not keep a full week of cooked meals in the refrigerator.

Food safety: Refrigerate perishables within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90 F / 32 C. Keep the refrigerator at 40 F / 4 C or below. Use refrigerated cooked leftovers within 3-4 days; freeze extra portions promptly. Reheat leftovers to 165 F / 74 C. [3]

Your shopping list

Approximate quantities for one adult for all seven days, including every optional snack. Packages may leave extra food. Check your pantry first; double amounts for two adults.

Produce

Berries: 3 cups, fresh or frozen; apples: 3; pears: 2; bananas: 2; oranges: 2; avocados: 2 small.
Leafy greens/spinach: one 8-10 oz bag; tomatoes: 5-6 medium; cucumbers: 2 medium; carrots: 4-5 medium; bell peppers: 2; sweet potatoes: 2 medium.
Broccoli: about 6 cups; green beans: about 3 cups (frozen is fine); corn: 1/2 cup; lemons/limes: 4; garlic: 1 bulb.

Beans, proteins and dairy alternatives

Chickpeas: 3 cans (15 oz each); white beans: 1 can (15 oz); black beans: 1 can (15 oz). Choose no-salt-added when possible; drain and rinse.
Lentils: 2 cans (15 oz each) or 3/4 cup dry; firm tofu: one 14 oz pack; salmon: 8-10 oz total; skinless chicken breast: 4-5 oz.
Plain low-fat yogurt: one 32 oz tub; unsweetened fortified soy milk or low-fat milk: 6 cups; hummus: 1/4 cup.

Whole grains

Rollled oats: about 2 1/2 cups dry; brown rice: about 3/4 cup dry; quinoa: about 1 cup dry; whole-wheat pasta: about 2 oz dry.
Whole-grain bread: 9 slices; whole-grain tortillas: 1 (freeze the extras).

Pantry and flavor

Olive oil: about 1/3 cup; unsalted walnuts: 1/4 cup; unsalted almonds: 2 tablespoons; chia seeds: 2 tablespoons; peanut butter: 3 tablespoons.
No-salt-added crushed tomatoes: 1/2 cup; low-sodium vegetable broth: one 32 fl oz carton; reduced-sodium soy sauce: 1 teaspoon.
Cinnamon, cumin, black pepper and dried herbs.

Budget tip: Choose store-brand oats, canned beans and frozen produce. Buy frozen salmon portions, or use another oily fish. Drain canned fish and compare sodium labels.

10 simple food swaps

Instead of...	Try...
Butter on toast	Avocado or peanut butter
Creamy pasta sauce	Tomato sauce with lentils
Sausage in a grain bowl	Beans or tofu
Full-fat sweetened yogurt	Plain low-fat yogurt with fruit
Coconut oil for everyday cooking	Olive or canola oil
Sugary breakfast pastry	Oatmeal with fruit and nuts
Refined-grain bread	Whole-grain bread
Chips as your usual snack	Unsalted nuts or fruit
Cream-based dressing	Olive oil and lemon, in a modest portion
Sugary drinks with meals	Water or unsweetened tea

Make the plan yours

Vegetarian: Replace fish or chicken with tofu, lentils or beans. The nutrient profile will differ.

Nut allergy: Omit nuts and peanut butter; use tolerated seed butter only if safe for you, or add yogurt or beans elsewhere.

Gluten-free: Use certified gluten-free oats and bread/pasta; rice and quinoa offer alternatives.

Dairy-free: Choose unsweetened fortified soy milk and soy yogurt; check protein and calcium on the label.

Focus on the overall pattern. Some swaps mainly reduce saturated fat; others add fiber or reduce added sugar. No single food guarantees a lower cholesterol result. [1, 2]

One week of small wins

Mark the habits you practiced. Leave blanks without judgment: this is a learning tool, not a scorecard.

Daily habit	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Chose oats, beans or lentils							
Included vegetables and fruit							
Chose whole grains							
Swapped a saturated-fat source							
Planned tomorrow's meal							

My easiest meal this week: _____

One habit I will repeat: _____

One change that would make next week easier: _____

Keep learning

Explore the full guide for more ways to support healthy cholesterol.

Read: [How to Lower Cholesterol Naturally](#)

Sources and next steps

General nutrition principles informed by the sources below; the menus and shopping amounts are original practical examples. No calories or nutrient totals have been calculated. Continue prescribed treatment and ask your clinician when to recheck your cholesterol.

1. American Heart Association: [How to Control Cholesterol](#)
2. American Heart Association: [Whole Grains, Refined Grains and Dietary Fiber](#)
3. USDA: [Leftovers and Food Safety](#)