

## LIVING HEART-SMART

Did you know heart disease is the number-one killer of American women and men? Annually, over a million Americans experience heart attacks, and heart disease takes the lives of around 500,000 people.<sup>1</sup>

Support your heart health by implementing these tips from the American Heart Association.<sup>2</sup> These seven simple measures can be influenced by diet and lifestyle changes and can improve heart health:



- Don't smoke
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Engage in regular physical activity
- Eat a healthy diet
- Manage blood pressure
- Keep blood sugar at healthy levels
- Take charge of cholesterol

Learn more at  
[www.heart.org/MyLifeCheck](http://www.heart.org/MyLifeCheck)

## Soy: A Heart-Healthy Choice

Eating a balanced diet with plenty of soy protein is one of the best things you can do for your heart. According to the US Food & Drug Administration, 25 grams of soy protein a day, when consumed as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease.<sup>3</sup>



Research suggests that consuming soy may also help lower cholesterol levels. A study compared cholesterol levels between those who drank soymilk and those who drank 1% dairy milk as part of an overall sensible diet. In only four weeks, the soymilk group showed a 5% reduction in LDL cholesterol — a statistically significant advantage over those who consumed dairy milk.<sup>4</sup> The greater your blood cholesterol level, the greater your risk of developing heart disease or suffering a heart attack.<sup>5</sup> Consult with your healthcare provider, and consider these guidelines for maintaining healthy cholesterol levels:<sup>6</sup>

	AT RISK	OPTIMAL	HIGH	VERY HIGH	MY LEVELS
Total Cholesterol		<200 mg/dL	≥240 mg/dL		
LDL (bad) Cholesterol		<100 mg/dL	160–189 mg/dL	≥190 mg/dL	
HDL (good) Cholesterol	<40 mg/dL (men) <50 mg/dL (women)	≥60 mg/dL			

Cholesterol levels are typically measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood.

## Simple Ways to Enjoy Soy

Incorporating soy protein into your diet is easier and more convenient than you might think. Simply replacing dairy milk with fortified soymilk on your morning cereal or adding edamame as a vegetable side dish are small changes that add up. Here is an example of just how easy it is to achieve the recommended 25 grams of soy protein per day.

MEAL	USING	AMOUNT OF SOY PROTEIN
Breakfast	1 cup soymilk	6 g
Lunch	½ cup tofu	10 g
Dinner	½ cup edamame	11 g
		27 g TOTAL

## Heart Health Benefits of a Plant-Based Diet

Like all plant-based foods, soy is naturally cholesterol-free. Replacing animal-based foods like beef and milk with soyfoods can be an effective way to lower your overall dietary cholesterol intake. Soyfoods offer a source of nutritionally complete protein, without the higher levels of saturated fat and cholesterol in many animal protein sources like beef. Fortified soymilk can provide just as much calcium and vitamin D as dairy milk, with significantly less saturated fat.

A high consumption of plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and legumes (including soybeans) is associated with lower rates of certain conditions including heart disease, stroke and diabetes.<sup>7</sup> Numerous studies also suggest that vegetarians — who consume mostly plant-based foods — have lower LDL-cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure and lower rates of hypertension than non-vegetarians.<sup>8</sup>

No single food can prevent heart disease, but smart diet and lifestyle choices can have a big impact on heart disease risk. Soyfoods offer a simple and appealing way to begin making heart-smart changes.



1 National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/chol/wyntk.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/chol/wyntk.pdf), accessed 9/2010.

2 American Heart Association: [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Healthy-Diet-Goals\\_UCM\\_310436\\_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Healthy-Diet-Goals_UCM_310436_SubHomePage.jsp), accessed 9/2010.

3 Food Labeling: Health Claims; Soy Protein and Coronary Heart Disease. Federal Register: (Volume 64, Number 206); 1999. p. 57699-733.

4 Gardner CD et al. J Am Coll Nutr 2007; Dec; 26(6): 669-77.

5 National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/chol/wyntk.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/chol/wyntk.pdf), accessed 9/2010.

6 National Cholesterol Education Program, ATP III Guidelines, US Dept of HHS, May 2001.

7 Hu FB. AJCN 2003; 78 (supp): 544S-51S.

8 Position of the American Dietetic Association: Vegetarian Diets. J Am Diet Assoc 2009; 109: 1266-1282.