

FEED YOUR POTENTIAL



BLOG #3: FEED YOUR HEART

When we talk about feeding your potential, what could be more important than ensuring you fuel your body with foods that support the health of your heart and help reduce your risk of heart related diseases and conditions.

February for many of us marks heart health month so it's a great time for us to give focus on eating to keep your heart healthy.

Know your fats

With so much talk of fats in the media it can be hard to know what types of fat to eat or avoid! The answer is simple... everything in moderation.

Dietary fats vary in their proportion of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids. They also vary in the specific fatty acids they contain. The categories of fatty acids are:

- **Saturated fatty acids** are found mostly in animal products such as meat, milk and butter, processed food as well as in tropical oils (eg coconut oil), these fats have been linked to increasing our LDL cholesterol, also referred to as our bad cholesterol. Research is ongoing around LDL's role in heart disease so watch this space...
- **Mono-unsaturated fatty acids** are found in olive oils, avocados and nuts, these fats have been linked to increasing our HDL "good" cholesterol.
- **Omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids** are present in many vegetable oils, these fatty acids have been linked to promoting growth and during inflammation halt cell damage and promote cell repair
- **Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids** are found in oily fish and some plant foods (such as walnuts and flaxseed). Foods rich in these fats have been linked to reduced cardiovascular risk.
- **Trans fatty acids** are produced when liquid fats are partially hydrogenated to make them more solid. These raise LDL, lower HDL ("good") cholesterol, and have other harmful effects. They are being phased out of foods but can be found in things like biscuits, crisps, cakes and processed foods.

The bottom line is we still advise limiting foods high in saturated fats, notably processed and fatty meats and focusing more on foods rich in unsaturated fats, such as fish and nuts.

EAT the 'whole' grain

It is well documented that diets rich in whole grains and therefore fibre help protect against heart disease as well as diabetes and some cancers.

The term 'whole' simply means that no part of the grain has been removed during processing which means they retain all of their nutritional integrity. Each part of the grain is important. The outside of the grain provides fibre, B-vitamins, and minerals. The starchy centre of the grain is rich in carbohydrates and protein. The smallest part of the grain contains vitamin E, as well as antioxidants and B vitamins. It is a combination of all parts of the whole grain that provide the body with so many health benefits.

Great example of whole grains to include in your diet are oats, brown rice, wholemeal pasta, wholegrain breads, buckwheat and quinoa.

Aim for the rainbow

Fruit and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals, fibre and other plant nutrients such as antioxidants that help protect your heart. Fresh, frozen, tinned and dried varieties all count. Eating a variety of different colour fruits and vegetables will help you get essential nutrients and can help you towards your 5-a-day. Plus, you're more likely to enjoy eating an attractive, colourful meal.

Say no to salt

Having too much salt in your diet can increase your risk of developing high blood pressure and this in turn increases your chance of developing coronary heart disease. The daily recommended maximum for an adult is 6g.

If you're dining with us at an Aramark location, just look for our Endorsed by Dietitians Stamp to find the healthier menu selections that will help promote a healthy and happy heart.

For more useful information and tips on heart health visit:

The British Heart Foundation: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/>

Irish Heart Foundation: <https://irishheart.ie/>

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