

# The GrapeVine

May 2020

## Spring Cleaning Your Eating Habits

With the changing of seasons--Spring in full bloom and soon Summer--it is the perfect time to rethink your eating habits. These tips are helpful for "spring cleaning" your eating habits now – or any time of year.

**Salt and Sodium!** Eating too much sodium can cause high blood pressure (hypertension), which increases your risk for heart disease or having a heart attack or stroke. Here's how to reduce sodium/salt in your diet:



- Processed foods, such as processed meats (deli meats), sauces, dressings, condiments, and instant products like instant noodles, contain high amounts of sodium. Limit these foods, instead, choose fresh vegetables, and meats, poultry, and seafood when possible.
- Avoid salting your food. Instead, try fresh or dried herbs and spices, such as oregano, basil, thyme, cumin, paprika, salt-free spice blends, etc.
- Shop for *low-sodium* or *no added salt* products. Read the Nutrition Facts Labels to find the products containing the lowest amount of sodium. If you can't get low/no salt added--rinse canned vegetables and beans to remove excess sodium, this simple step removes almost half of the sodium.

**Saturated Fats!** Saturated fats are usually solid at room temperature and include fats in red meat, poultry with skin, butter, 2% and whole milk and cheeses. Saturated fat raises cholesterol levels and increases your risk of heart disease. To lower your intake:

- Choose low or fat-free dairy such as milk, cheese, and yogurt.
- Include a variety of proteins in your diet. Focus on lean meats, poultry without the skin, fish/seafood, and plant-based proteins such as beans, lentils, nuts and seeds.



**Added Sugars!** A diet high in added sugars increases your risk for type 2 diabetes, excess weight gain and obesity. These simple changes can have a big impact:

- Limit sugar sweetened beverages such as soda, fruit juice drinks, iced tea, and sports drinks. Instead choose water, seltzer, or unsweetened teas. Infuse water with fresh fruit and vegetables, or a splash of 100% fruit juice, for added flavor.
- Choose canned fruits in water or natural juice instead of syrup, whenever possible.
- Eat mindfully when it comes to sweet treats and focus on portion sizes. Try fresh, canned, or frozen fruit as a dessert to lower sugar intake.



### Start a Healthy Gossip

Children can participate in spring cleaning eating habits too! Get them involved by asking the following questions:

- What herbs and spices can we use to flavor our food other than salt?
- Why is it important to pay attention to how much added sugar we eat?

## Upcoming Events

We are working on virtual food safety and orientation meetings. Our Agency Relations Team will forward registration information when it is available.



## NUTRITION RESOURCE CENTER



Connected **for Life**

American Diabetes Association  
Understanding the Food Label

Visit the link below to discover the importance of reading and understanding the Nutrition Facts Label. Understanding food labels is the key to making healthy food choices and making grocery shopping easier. Learn about serving sizes, packaging claims and more.

<https://www.diabetes.org/nutrition/understanding-food-labels>



American Heart Association

American Heart Association  
Recipes Collections

Looking for heart healthy recipes that are low sodium and delicious? Check out the recipe collection from the American Heart Association. Get your children involved and let them choose a recipe they would like to try!

<https://recipes.heart.org/en>



## Spring Bean Salad

### Ingredients:

- 1 can cannellini beans (rinsed and drained)
- 1 can chickpeas (rinsed and drained)
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced
- 1 red onion, diced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning (or any herbs that you have on hand)



### Directions:

1. Rinse and drain beans to reduce sodium.
2. Dice cucumber and onion. Slice tomatoes.
3. Combine beans and vegetables in a bowl.
4. In a separate bowl, combine oil, vinegar, minced garlic, and seasoning.
5. Pour dressing over salad and mix well.
6. Best served chilled.

### Tips and Facts:

- ✓ Beans provide lots of fiber and protein. Serve this recipe as part of a 'Meatless Monday' meal.
- ✓ Choosing low sodium canned beans will help reduce risk of high blood pressure and heart disease.
- ✓ Try using various fresh or dried herbs in this salad. Let your children pick!