

# Nutritious Add-Ons

Try adding any of the following nutritious items to whatever you choose - hot cereal, cold cereal, yogurt, pancakes, muffins, casseroles, salads, or other dishes:

**Flax Seed, ground** - These small, dark seeds are rich in alpha-linolenic acid, which is an essential omega-3 fatty acid. They are also a good source of both soluble and insoluble fiber. They can help to lower serum LDL-cholesterol, and may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. You can buy flax seed in many natural food stores. Buy whole seeds, and mill or grind them in a coffee bean grinder or blender, or buy the flax meal (already ground). After they have been ground, the seeds should be stored in the refrigerator to preserve the healthful oils.

The seeds have a pleasant, nutty taste. They can go in most dishes, even in spaghetti sauce or baked goods!

**Wheat Germ** - the very inner part of a grain of wheat. It is rich in vitamins and minerals, including the antioxidant vitamin E. Find it in the breakfast cereal aisle. Store it in the refrigerator.



**Wheat Bran** - the outer, fiber-rich part of the wheat grain. It is very high in insoluble fiber, which helps to prevent constipation, diverticular disease, and possibly colon cancer. Find it in the breakfast cereal aisle.

**Oat Bran** - the outer part of the oat grain. It is rich in soluble fiber, which can help to reduce serum LDL-cholesterol, and control blood sugar in diabetes. Find it in the breakfast cereal aisle.

**Rice Bran** - the outer part of the rice grain. Like oat bran, it is a good source of soluble fiber and can lower serum LDL-cholesterol. Find it in natural food stores.

## Other Good Choices for Your Diet...

**Legumes** - this group includes beans, lentils, and peas. These are all very good sources of soluble fiber, which can lower LDL-cholesterol. They are also excellent sources of many vitamins and minerals. You can buy many kinds of dried beans, and soak and cook them in water. Or you can choose the convenience of canned beans - just drain and rinse them well in a colander. Use your beans, lentils, and peas in a variety of ways. Try your hand at lentil soup, baked beans, rice and beans, and three bean salad. Also try chili with lots of beans, and hummus. Experiment with seasonings - beans love cumin, chili powder, vinegar, onions, and garlic. Enjoy!



**Soy Foods** - Soy beans and many of the foods made from this nutritious bean contain soy protein. Foods containing soy protein may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by reducing serum LDL-cholesterol. Soybeans, like flax seed and fish, also contain omega-3 fatty acids. This type of fat helps to protect against heart disease. Eating soybeans as a vegetable, or snacking on soy nuts, provides fiber. Another good reason to choose soy products often: soy contains isoflavones, which can act as protective antioxidants and can mimic hormone activity in a protective way. Try the green soybeans, called Edamame. They take only about 5 minutes to boil and taste great! Even kids will enjoy eating them right out of their shell.

Try tofu, tempeh, soy nuts, and soy beverages. Soy protein is also used in many meat substitutes, such as soy burgers, soy hot dogs, veggie nuggets, soy crumbles, breakfast links (sausage substitute) and breakfast strips (bacon substitute). Soy is also the major ingredient in many dairy substitutes, such as soy cheeses, yogurts, and frozen desserts. Many of these foods are delicious, and when you use them to take the place of meat, you will reduce your intake of saturated fat and cholesterol.

**Fish** - is naturally low in saturated fat, and contains omega-3 fatty acids. This type of fat has a protective effect against cardiovascular disease through a variety of actions. Omega-3 fatty acids are antithrombotic (have an anti-clotting effect on the blood), can lower an elevated serum triglyceride level, and help prevent arrhythmias. The beneficial effects of omega-3 fatty acids in the prevention and treatment of other diseases are also being studied. These diseases include stroke, autoimmune disorders, Crohn's disease, certain cancers, hypertension, and rheumatoid arthritis.

All fish and shellfish contain omega-3 fatty acids, but more is found in fish from deeper, colder water. Good seafood sources of omega-3 fatty acids include:

Salmon  
Trout  
Mackerel  
Bluefish



Sardines  
Herring  
Swordfish

Eating fish at least twice per week is recommended. Not only will you benefit from the omega-3 fatty acids, but by eating less meat and poultry with skin, you will consume less saturated fat.

**Nuts and Seeds** - most nuts and seeds are rich in monounsaturated and /or polyunsaturated fatty acids, both of which have beneficial effects upon serum cholesterol. The tree nuts, in particular walnuts, pecans, and almonds, seem to have a protective effect against cardiovascular disease. Walnuts are actually an excellent source of beneficial omega-3 fatty acids. Nuts and seeds are also good sources of protein, fiber, and many vitamins and minerals.

You can use nuts and seeds in baked goods, on salads, mixed into yogurt or cereal, or as a nutritious snack with raisins or other dried fruit. Remember that although nuts and seeds have been found to contain healthful fatty acids, they remain high in total fat content, so moderation is important - adding nuts and seeds to your breakfast or lunch is healthful, but snacking on a whole cup of them is not.

**Garlic** - a good choice because it contains allicin, which may lower LDL-cholesterol and inhibits platelet aggregation (it therefore acts as a blood thinner). After crushing fresh garlic, it is best to wait at least 15 minutes before cooking to allow the enzyme allinase to release the beneficial allicin.



**Green Tea and Black Tea** - These teas contain potent antioxidants called flavonoids and catechins. Studies suggest that drinking green and black teas may protect against cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancer. Enjoy them as iced teas in the summer.

**Grapes and Grape Juice** - phenolic compounds (in particular one called resveratrol) in grape seeds and skins act as disease-fighting antioxidants.

**Margarines and Oils** – Try Smart Balance Omega-Plus margarine. This margarine, if used daily, can lower LDL-cholesterol by as much as 15%. The cholesterol-lowering effect is due to plant sterols. It is also beneficial for HDL and triglycerides because of the omega-3 oils in the spread. Earth Balance also has a margarine that is excellent.

Good oil choices are canola oil, olive oil, flax seed oil, and walnut oil. Canola oil and olive oil are both very monounsaturated, and can help to lower LDL-cholesterol. Flax seed oil and walnut oil are good sources of healthful omega-3 fatty acids. In fact, flax seed is the richest plant source of alpha-linolenic acid, which is an essential fatty acid. Flax seed oil can be found in natural food stores. It must be stored in an opaque bottle, and refrigerated, to prevent rancidity. While flax seed oil is not good for cooking (it has too low of a smoking point), it combines nicely with your favorite vinegar and herbs to make very good salad dressing (keep refrigerated).

If you are trying to watch your calories and lose weight, remember that all margarines and oils, even the healthful ones just mentioned, are made of fat and are therefore very rich in calories. **Use in moderation!** Good nonstick cookware will help you to cook without too much added fat, and using a vegetable oil spray can also be a great help.