

Safety Bulletin

Eat Wisely to Stay Heart Healthy

According to a study released last summer by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, truck driving ranks as the second least heart-healthy occupation in the United States.

The study evaluated 66,000 people in 22 occupations, and ranked participants based on how well they met seven “heart healthy” goals set by the American Heart Association (AHA). Those goals include not smoking, staying physically active, maintaining an ideal weight and a healthy diet, and having normal blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol levels. A total of 14.3% of truckers surveyed hit just two or fewer of these goals.

Since February is American Heart Month, this is a great time for you to make a heart-healthy change. A balanced diet can help improve your heart health, your weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels. Here are 8 tips from the AHA:



- 1. Count your calories.** An average American diet is 2,000 calories a day. That can change based on your age, gender and level of physical activity.
- 2. Swap your snacks.** Put down the chips, donuts or microwave popcorn. They all have trans fats (also called partially hydrogenated vegetable oils). They are dangerous for your heart. Instead, grab fruits and vegetables or nuts for a tasty treat. Fresh veggies and fruits are preferred, but canned is OK too.
- 3. Watch what you drink.** Low-fat milk (skim or 1%) is a healthier choice than whole milk. It's also important to swap the sweets and sugar-packed soda for water or other lower-calorie drinks and treats.
- 4. Think lean.** Red meat can be OK, but choosing leaner cuts with less fat (fewer than 10 grams per serving) is healthier. Round roast and sirloin are two leaner meats.
- 5. Try chicken or fish.** Chicken without skin is always a heart-healthy choice. So too is fish such as salmon, trout or herring, which contain omega-3 fatty acids that help to reduce joint pain, inflammation and cholesterol levels. Aim to eat fish twice a week.
- 6. Look for whole-grains.** Whole-wheat or rye bread, brown or wild rice, and whole-wheat or whole-grain pasta are all smart choices.
- 7. Halt the salt.** Choose low-sodium foods. Aim for no more than 2,400 milligrams of sodium per day. The lower your sodium intake, the better your blood pressure.
- 8. Watch what you eat on the road.** If you're eating fast food, choose grilled chicken, salads, low-fat milk, fruit or oatmeal. At the diner or truck stop, skip the calorie-loaded appetizers, and avoid fried foods and calorie-packed desserts.