Heart Healthy eating includes cutting down on dietary cholesterol, total fat intake, saturated fats and trans fatty acids in the diet. Those who have diabetes are at greater risk for developing heart disease.

Cholesterol
All animals, including people, make cholesterol. Therefore any animal product will have some cholesterol in it. This includes milk, cheese, meat, poultry and fish.

Total fat
The total amount of dietary fat eaten has an impact on blood cholesterol levels. Total fat includes unsaturated and unsaturated fat. Choose lower fat foods whenever possible, such as low fat dairy and leaner meat; lower fat snack foods and lower fat cooking methods.

Saturated fat
Foods high in saturated fats tend to raise blood cholesterol. A saturated® is a word that refers to the chemical structure of some fat. Saturated fats are usually firm or hold their shapes at room temperature. The foods that are high in saturated fat include fatty fresh and processed meats, the skin and fat of poultry, high-fat dairy products, lard, palm oil, and coconut oil.

Unsaturated fats
Unsaturated fats will be either monounsaturated or polyunsaturated. This refers to the chemical structure of the fat.

Monounsaturated oils tend to reduce blood cholesterol in some studies. Other studies suggest they have a neutral effect. There does not seem to be any negative effects of moderate consumption of monounsaturated oils. Monounsaturated oils are sometimes referred to as omega-9 (ω-9) oils. Olive oil, peanut, sunflower and canola oils are high in monounsaturated fatty acids.

Polyunsaturated plant oils like corn, safflower, and soybean tend to lower blood cholesterol as well. However, consuming large amounts of polyunsaturated oils may increase risk for certain cancers because polyunsaturated fatty acids can
oxidize to form breakdown products that may be carcinogenic (cancer causing). Polyunsaturated plant oils are often referred to as omega-6 (ω-6) oils.

*Polyunsaturated marine oils* have been linked to reduced rates of cardiovascular disease. These oils are referred to as omega-3 (ω-3) oils. Omega-3 oils can lower both blood triglycerides and cholesterol. They can also cause blood platelets to become less sticky and you have less clotting, and perhaps chance of stroke, than when platelets are very sticking. These findings do not warrant taking fish oil supplements. They do suggest that fish should be included as a part of a normal, varied diet.

**Trans fatty acids**
Foods high in trans fatty acids also tend to raise blood cholesterol. A Trans@ is also a word that refers to the chemical structure of certain fats when they have had hydrogen added to them to make them firm. The foods high in trans fatty acids will be made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, such as baked goods and snack foods.

**Remember…**
- Diabetes is a risk actor for heart disease
- To lower your risk of developing cardiovascular disease, practice reading your labels for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and calories.

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