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More Healthy Eating Choices

Getting back to our series on healthy eating leads to the discussion of meat, fish, and dairy. Unraveling the mystery of how to make good choices in our eating habits isn't as complicated as you might think. I am continuing to use data compiled by Janet M. Pollard, MPH, and Carol A. Rice, Ph.d., R.N. from Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

With meat preparation, remove the skin from the poultry and avoid fatty meats. Choose the lean cuts of meat and cook it without adding saturated or trans fat. The best way to cook meat, poultry, or fish is to grill, bake, broil, or boil it. Also, remove all visible fat from the meat or poultry. As convenient as processed meats might be, they are full of sodium and saturated fat, so try to avoid these as much as possible. Moderation in our intake is key to healthy eating. The American Heart Association recommends eating no more than six ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, fish or seafood a day. It is also recommended to eat at least two servings of fish each week.

Our healthy dairy choices start with minimizing how much whole-fat dairy products we intake. No matter what dairy product you are consuming, you should buy fat-free or 1 percent fat.

This includes cheese, milk, and yogurt. When you are choosing butter, look for "0 g trans fat" on the Nutrition Facts Label.

Eating a low-fat, heart-healthy diet isn't as difficult as you think. However, it takes some work. It is easier to accomplish when you plan out your meals for the entire week, this includes breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Once you have your menu for the week, you can easily create a shopping list. Try to do your shopping when you have plenty of time to read the labels. Often we get in a hurry and grab things without checking their nutritional value.

So, I challenge you to gradually incorporate these healthy changes into your diet. This, along with exercise, will help you be healthier in 2008! For more information on this and other subjects, visit our website at <http://fcs.tamu.edu> or call the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office at 903/473-5000, ext. 157.