

Wise Notes for Consumers

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Shifting to a Healthful Meal Plan

A few weeks ago Wise notes for Consumers pointed out the Simple 7 which is seven easy ways to help control your risk for heart disease. One of the simple ways is to eat smart by choosing a diet low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol, and moderate in total fats. One strategy for accomplishing this is to think about where you may need to do some shifting.

Eating healthier doesn't mean you have to give up all the foods you love. It doesn't have to be confusing or complicated either. The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines has a better approach—make small shifts in the foods you eat. When you can, swap out a food or ingredient for a healthier option. Following are ideas for healthy shifts-

- Shift from whole milk to low-fat milk in your breakfast cereal
- Shift from soda with added sugars to water during lunch
- Shift from a cream-based pasta dish to one with a lighter sauce and more vegetables for dinner.

To eat more whole grains:

- Choose whole-wheat bread instead of white
- Have popcorn for a snack instead of potato chips (just leave out the butter)

To cut down on saturated fats:

- Twice a week, have seafood instead of fatty cuts of meat for dinner

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- When you are making chili or stew, reduce the amount of meat and add more beans and vegetables

To cut down on added sugars:

- Consumer 100% juice or water instead of fruit punch
- Have a homemade fruit smoothie instead of ice cream

To cut down on sodium (salt)

- Switch to unsalted nuts
- Shift from regular canned soups to low-sodium

To use oils instead of Solid Fats

- Dip your whole wheat bread in olive oil instead of spreading on butter
- Choose an oil-based salad dressing instead of cream-based.

A few more final thoughts for making shifts throughout the day when you:

- Open a fridge for a snack
- Shop in the grocery store
- Stand at a vending machine
- Pack a lunch
- Look at a menu in a restaurant

So what shift will you make today? National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 3, 2017. The purpose of this day is to empower women to take charge of their heart health. I challenge not only women, but men as well to begin making shifts to find a healthy eating pattern that works for your family. Check out ChooseMyPlate.gov or contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Wise County office at 940/627-3341 for additional information.

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