

HealthPoint

TRENDS IN HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Shake Up Your Lunch

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Yawn. Your ham, cheese and tomato sandwich on white bread is tired. Sure, your lunch contains all four food groups and will help keep you full between breakfast and dinner, but is it inspiring? Does it nourish your heart? Lunch should do that.

Make it vs. take-out

Toting lunch from home is a great way to save money and use fewer environmentally unfriendly Styrofoam or plastic containers. But most importantly, it's the best way to control what goes into your lunch bag, and ultimately what goes into your body.

If take-out is your only option, take note: with a bit of knowledge you can make healthy choices using the same heart-smart ingredients that you'd prepare at home. There are certain foods that you can pick – or pack – that are both heart healthy and delicious. Consider some of these options:

From home: Salmon BLT (see attached); soy nuts; banana

Take-out: Japanese food: Tuna and salmon sushi; edamame; avocado salad

Why it's heart healthy: Oily fish such as tuna and salmon are chock-full of omega-3 fats, which can help lower triglyceride and blood pressure levels. When these levels are controlled, your risk of heart disease declines. Soy-based foods such as edamame and soy nuts provide a modest reduction in LDL "bad" cholesterol levels and also provide high concentrations of other vitamins and minerals.

From home: Turkey and bean rice wrap; grapes

Take-out: Middle Eastern or Greek food: Hummus with whole-grain pita; chicken kabob; grilled vegetables

Why it's heart healthy: Black beans and chickpeas (in the hummus) are high in cholesterol-lowering soluble fibre. Chicken and turkey are low in saturated fat but rich in protein, which helps make you feel full and snack less. That can help reduce the likelihood of weight gain, another risk factor for heart disease.

From home: Ginger beef broccoli salad, whole grain roll; orange

Take-out: From the deli: turkey on whole-grain bread; coleslaw with vinaigrette; apple

Why it's heart healthy: A high intake of whole grains such as oats can help lower certain heart disease risk factors, including LDL "bad" cholesterol. Look for whole-grain bread that includes oats. Eating lots of fruit and vegetables is also associated with a decreased risk of developing heart disease – for each additional serving of fruit and vegetables you eat a day, your risk of heart disease decreases by four percent.

Whether you dine in, take out or carry along, lunch should always have a beverage, too. Water is your best bet for staying hydrated without packing on the extra calories found in pop and other sweet beverages. Unsweetened coffee, tea and skim milk are other good options.

On the run

It's important to make time for lunch. But, with hectic schedules and unavoidable crises, some days are too busy to stop. When you're late for a meeting and don't have time for a complete lunch, reach for one of these snacks to hold you over until you can have a proper meal. These options are much better than chips or candy:

From home: low-fat yogurt

Take out: From a coffee shop: skim milk latte

Why it's heart healthy: Low-fat dairy products contain a blood pressure-lowering combination of nutrients, including calcium, magnesium and phosphorus.

From home: Handful of unsalted almonds

Take out: From a convenience store: Unsalted mixed nuts

Why it's heart healthy: Enjoying 50 mL (¼ cup) of nuts about four times per week can lower heart disease risk by up to 37 percent.

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GROUP BENEFITS

Salmon BLT

Serves 3 | Prep Time: 10mins | Cook Time: 10mins | Total Time: 20mins

A bacon-lettuce-and-tomato sandwich on the go can be filled with high fat bacon and not much protein. This open-faced sandwich is packed with protein and flavor that is easy to enjoy for lunch with a knife and fork or a light dinner with a crunchy green salad.

Ingredients

- 1 salmon fillet, skinned (about 250 g/8 oz)
- 25 mL (2 tbsp) light mayonnaise
- 15 mL (1 tbsp) prepared relish
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 mL (1/4 tsp) freshly ground black pepper
- 2 slices turkey bacon
- 2 large lettuce leaves
- 1 small tomato, sliced
- 3 slices whole-grain bread, toasted (if desired)



Directions

1. Place salmon on small parchment or foil lined baking sheet.
2. In small bowl, stir together mayonnaise, relish, garlic and pepper. Spread over top of salmon and roast in 220 C (425 F) oven for about 10 minutes or until fish flakes when tested. Cut into 3 pieces.
3. Meanwhile, in skillet or microwave, cook bacon until browned. Cut each into 3 pieces.
4. Cover bread with lettuce, tomato and bacon. Top with salmon and serve.

Tip: Look for tail end pieces of salmon to use for this sandwich as they are thinner and easier to fit onto the bread.

Nutritional Info Per Serving: 284 calories; 21g protein; 14g total fat; 3g saturated fat; 3g fibre; 452mg sodium

Recipe developed by Emily Richards, PH Ec.

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