

3 Best Ingredients for a Healthy Heart

by Shannon Spence

As Americans are smartening up about the preventative measures we can take to avoid heart disease, we're looking to the kitchen to provide answers. And fortunately, there are quite a few to be found. Research has discovered powerful compounds deep in the heart of some of our favorite meal builders.

Keep these tips in mind before whipping up your next delicious (and nutritious) meal.

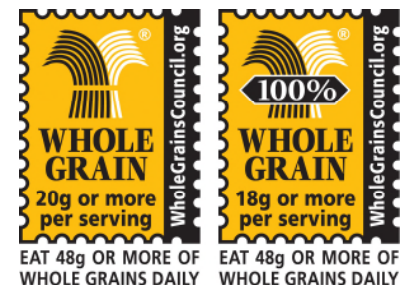
Olive oil

Not only is this awesome oil good for your heart, it's good for your brain, too! According to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, consuming more than four tablespoons a day can lower your risk of heart attack, stroke and heart disease. Olive oil is loaded with monounsaturated fat, which can help lower cholesterol and control insulin levels. But be advised as you're deciding which extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) to buy; recent studies have found that a good amount of imported EVOOs are adulterated versions and as a result, don't offer the same health benefits. Studies found that domestics were much more likely to be the real deal. Opt for local varieties at the grocery store or farmer's market to ensure you're getting the most heart-healthy bang for your buck. If the option is available, do a bit of taste testing, and be a snob about it. Swish it around in your mouth and note the peppery kick in your throat as you swallow. Good EVOO should linger.

Expert tip: Keep olive oil away from your stove and other sources of heat. Storing it at cooler temperatures will make it last longer.

Whole grains

The hearty amount of fiber in whole grain foods makes them a good choice to promote heart health. Not sure what's truly "whole" and what's not? One easy way to identify authentic whole grains is to look for the whole grains stamp of approval. Any product marked with this stamp is recognized by the Whole Grains Council and must meet the guidelines of the stamp program. Check for the stamp when buying bread, tortillas, pasta, cereal, snacks, flour, baking mixes and bread crumbs. You can also check out the [Whole Grains Council website](http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org) while making your grocery list. They have a searchable library of every product that meets their requirements.



Expert tip: Don't like the flavor or texture of whole wheat? Look for white whole-wheat flour. It's milder in flavor, but still has all of the nutrition.

Go365 is not an insurance product. This material is provided for informational use only and should not be construed as medical advice or used in place of consulting a licensed medical professional. Consult with your doctor to determine what is right for you.

GCHHRD2EN_rev1217



Seasonings

Using seasonings when cooking is a good way to cut down on sodium without cutting down on flavor, which benefits the heart. Consider these tips if your dishes need some spicing up:

- Add more bite with fresh hot peppers. After removing the membrane and seeds, chop the peppers up finely and remember, a little goes a long way.
- Add vinegar or citrus juice to give fruits and veggies a burst of flavor. Do this at the last moment to avoid over-saturating food.
- Beware of prepackaged dressings and seasonings. Oftentimes, these are loaded with excess salt. Instead, make your own by grinding fresh herbs with a mortar and pestle. You'll find the fullest flavor without the added salt.
- Add zest to your meals with a pinch or two of dry mustard. Or, mix it in with water to lend a sharp flavor to any dish.

Expert tip: The ratio for fresh to dried herbs is 3 to 1. So, when a recipe calls for 1 teaspoon of dried herbs, you can also use 3 teaspoons of fresh.

Looking for more ways to manage your heart health? As a Go365[®] member, you have a lot of options, including:

- Log your food – When you connect MyFitnessPal to the Go365 App, you can track your food and beverage intake and earn weekly Points.
- Work with a health coach - Our health coaches work with you on an area of focus of your choosing, including nutrition, weight management, and physical activity. Your coach can help you set goals and hold you accountable along the way.
- Get a biometric screening – This activity can be a great indicator as to how hard your heart and body are working.
- Log verified workouts – There's no better way to work your heart than with daily exercise. Just make sure you've connected your compatible trackers and/or participating fitness facility membership to Go365 so you don't miss out on Points!
- Check out the Go365 social channels – You can find heart-healthy recipes and tips on the Go365 [Facebook](#), [Tumblr](#) and Community locations.

With Go365, you're not alone. We help you achieve your health goals every step of the way. Find more recommended activities on Go365.com or through the Mobile App.

Sources

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/02/26/health/five-things-olive-oil/index.html>

<http://www.marksdailyapple.com/is-your-olive-oil-really-olive-oil/#axzz2ielCX6MI>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/health-tip/HT00439>

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyCooking/Healthier-Preparation-Methods-for-Cooking_UCM_301484_Article.jsp

Go365 is not an insurance product. This material is provided for informational use only and should not be construed as medical advice or used in place of consulting a licensed medical professional. Consult with your doctor to determine what is right for you.

GCHHRD2EN_rev1217