

10 Tips for a Heart-Healthy Refrigerator



1. Take stock of what's inside

Once a month, pull everything out and separate the better-for-you foods from the rest. Make sure you have more low-fat, high-fiber and low-sugar foods than other types. If not, consider reducing the number. Choose more low-fat and fat-free dressings, condiments and sauces instead of regular ones.

2. Hide desserts

Stow away desserts and other indulgent foods in the crisper, so they're "out of sight, out of mind." Most of the time, healthier foods like fruits and vegetables are the ones that perish the quickest and, therefore, should be kept on the refrigerator shelf where you can see and eat them. (Americans on average waste about \$10 a week on produce that spoils.)

3. Organize by "more" and "less"

Divide your refrigerator into different sections of "choose more often" and "choose less often." This could be by shelf or within the shelf, always keeping healthier foods up front and less healthy foods toward the back.

4. Substitute higher-fat foods with lower-fat foods

Some examples include skim or low-fat almond milk for whole milk, soft margarine for butter, and lean meats, chicken and fish for ribs, ground meat and other fattier meats. A simple substitution such as soft margarine for butter over a week's time can save you an entire day's worth of saturated fat.

5. Make healthy eating fun for the family

Color code foods with stars or heart stickers to make healthy choices easy to identify—use green for heart-healthy and red for less healthy.

6. Make healthy foods appealing

Keep toppings next to a healthy food to make it more appetizing. Next time you want a snack, you'll be more likely to eat something healthy if the almonds are next to the low-fat Greek yogurt or the hummus is beside the vegetables, ready to be mixed together.

7. Prepare leftovers as a meal for the next day

Put the entrée with the vegetables and other side items on a plate and cover for the next day's lunch or dinner to create a do-it-yourself balanced "TV" dinner.

8. Prepare foods as "ready-to-eat" meals when you come home from grocery shopping

Cut up vegetables and fruits and store them in containers so they'll be ready for the next meal or a ready-to-eat snack.

9. Freeze foods in portion sizes to make healthy eating easier

Do you know the recommended serving of cooked meat is 3 ounces, similar in size to a deck of playing cards? The standard serving size for pasta is 1 cup and half a cup for vegetables.

10. Freeze fruit for fun

Freeze fruits such as bananas, grapes and orange slices to make them more fun to eat for children. Next time they want a sweet snack, offer them frozen fruit rather than ice cream. These are easy to incorporate into smoothies for a healthy, refreshing treat.



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