

Cardiac Diet

A cardiac diet, as the name suggests, is often prescribed for patients who have a history of heart related problems / diseases. The cardiac diet is a healthy eating plan prepared to counter diseases such as high blood pressure, obesity, heart attack and so on. Even if a person does not suffer from a heart condition it is advisable to follow this diet as a preventive measure.

Some Basic Facts about the Cardiac Diet

The following are some basic facts that determine the cardiac diet.

Consumption of Foods that Contain Healthy Fats

Healthy Fats:

Two types of fat that can be beneficial for the body are polyunsaturated fats and monounsaturated fats.

Polyunsaturated fats are found in foods such as:

- leafy green vegetables
- nuts
- seeds
- fish

Monounsaturated fats are said to decrease the levels of LDL or 'bad' cholesterol in the body. They are found in foods such as:

- milk products
- avocado
- olives
- nuts

Unhealthy Fats:

One should avoid the consumption of trans fat and saturated fats. Trans fat increase the level of bad cholesterol in the body. They are often found in:

- packaged food items that are fried
- in some of the foods sold in fast food restaurants

Although they help to increase the shelf life of a product they are very harmful for the body. Saturated fats are found in foods such as:

- cream
- cheese
- butter
- ghee
- coconut oil

Consumption of Foods Rich in Fibre Content

Fiber rich food are an excellent source to reduce the levels of LDL (low-density lipoprotein) and increase the levels of HDL (high-density lipoprotein) in our body. They also help in improving digestion and preventing constipation. Foods that are rich in fiber include:

- fresh fruits and vegetables (such as cabbage, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower)
- legumes (soybeans, peas)
- prunes

- nuts and seeds
- whole grains

Other Factors to Keep in Mind for an Effective Cardiac Diet Plan

- Apart from the above mentioned factors, the following steps should also be implemented to make your cardiac diet a successful and fruitful plan.
- reduction of sodium intake
- eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables
- non-vegetarians are advised to take fish
- reduction of the consumption of foods that are high in animal fats
- elimination of caffeine consumption
- avoiding consumption of foods that contain trans-fat (trans fat or unsaturated fats increase the level of LDL (low-density lipoprotein) or bad cholesterol and decrease the level of HDL (high-density lipoprotein) or good cholesterol)
- including foods that contain plant stanols (these increase the level of HDL and decrease the level of LDL)

Some Steps that Help to Enhance your Cardiac Diet

Apart from following a well-planned cardiac diet, it also helps to consciously make an attempt to change one's lifestyle for the better. The following pointers will help to enhance your cardiac diet and enable it to yield concrete results.

- exercise: regular exercise is a must to make any dietary plan successful.
- reduce the intake of salt in your food: This may seem like a very difficult task initially, but after a while, our taste buds will get used to this constructive change.
- controlling portion intake: Exercise discipline while consuming food and try to limit your portions of food intake. This will enable you to control your weight and pave the way for a healthy heart as well.
- Reducing stress: This is another very vital aspect of keeping your heart healthy. It has been noted that stress and anxiety are sure factors that lead towards heart trouble and so, make a conscious effort to reduce stress in your lives.
- Switching to healthy living by making small but effective changes: One such change could be done with regard to the cooking oil you use. You could begin using a healthy option like olive oil instead of refined oil. Try and eat whole grain breads and switch to eating lean meat with reduced fat content.
- Low fat / skimmed milk: Switch to using low fat or skimmed milk instead of whole milk or cream.
- Reading food labels: Learn to read food labels and buy what is best for your heart.
- Switching to healthy cooking techniques: You could choose to bake instead of deep frying in oil.
- Consult a professional medical practitioner: A professional medical practitioner will be able to give you a comprehensive understanding of your current health status. They will be able to guide you better by suggesting an effective diet plan and fitness regime to suite your individual situation.

<http://www.cardiacdiet.org/>