

# VEGUARY

*Love Your Heart*



## Top 8 Ways to Love Your Heart

1. Eat a Cholesterol-Free, Low-Fat, Whole Food, Plant-Based Diet
2. Increase Your Intake of Dietary Fiber – Beans are Fiber Champs!
3. Enjoy Some Soy!
4. Increase Your Intake of Antioxidants from Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
5. Increase Your Intake of Carotenoids from Orange Fruits and Vegetables
6. Fill Up on Whole Grains and Healthy Starches
7. Enjoy Nuts, Seeds, and Avocados (in moderation for weight loss)
8. Decrease Inflammation in Your Body

### 1. Saturated Fat and Cholesterol

Decrease your intake of saturated fat and eliminate cholesterol to lower blood cholesterol levels. While the effect of dietary cholesterol has recently been a controversial topic, the science remains clear that avoiding it in foods helps to minimize your risk.

### 2. Dietary Fiber

Increase dietary fiber to reduce blood cholesterol. Beans are your fiber champions with roughly 7 grams per ½ cup! Following or approaching a whole foods plant-based diet will provide you with plenty of fiber to also aid in weight loss, and overall health!

### 3. Soybeans

While soybeans and their products may be the most touted to reduce cholesterol, any beans can help. In the case of soy, go for the more natural sources like miso, tempeh, edamame and tofu.

### 4. Antioxidants

Increasing intake of antioxidants can improve functioning of the blood vessels as well as reducing oxidation of fats and cholesterol in our guts. Think lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. Note that whole foods work, antioxidants supplements don't.

### 5. Carotenoids

Fruits and vegetables can help reduce the risk for heart disease, especially those with lots of carotenoids (richly colored red, yellow, orange and dark green fruits, vegetables).

## 6. Healthy Grains and Starches

Whole grains are associated with lower risk for heart disease. They are a great, filling source of low-fat complex carbs. We love oats, brown rice, kasha and quinoa!

## 7. Healthy Fats

Saturated fats can increase your cholesterol levels. This includes products made from plant sources such as coconut and palm and concentrated in their oil and other processed products made from them.

In a small study, only 4 Brazil nuts per month decreased blood cholesterol levels more effectively than statin drugs and appeared to keep them down even 30 days after that single ingestion! Up to one per day is probably OK, keeping in mind other calorically and high fat foods you might already have in your diet. As far as other nuts, 0 to 3 servings per day is recommended by the Dean Ornish program.

One serving size is:

5 almonds	9 pistachios	1 whole walnut
1 Brazil Nut	3 pecan halves	2 cashews
6 peanuts (no shell)	5 tsp. flax seeds, ground	2 tsp. chia or sunflower seeds, shelled
5 tsp. pumpkin seeds		

## 8. Inflammation

Dietary choices help reduce inflammation in the blood vessels. Inflammation plays a large role in the process of atherosclerosis. There are several ways to decrease inflammation:

- Increase Nitric Oxide in your blood by consuming greens (and chew them well)
- Weight loss (a whole foods plant-based diet can aid in this)
- Adding more vegetables to your diet, especially green ones!
- Spice it up! Add healthy herbs and spices to your meals. Our favorites are turmeric, ginger, onions, garlic and cayenne/chilies.
- Reduced or eliminated intake of saturated fat (which is primarily found in animal products)
- Elimination of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils (known as trans fats)
- Reduction or elimination in use of oils. The reality is that oils are ultra-processed and extremely low in terms of nutritive value. They contain no fiber, no minerals and are 100% fat calories. Both the mono-unsaturated and saturated fat contained in oils is harmful to the endothelium, the innermost lining of the artery, and that injury is the gateway to vascular disease. It doesn't matter whether it's olive oil, corn oil, coconut oil, canola oil, or any other kind. Avoiding oil can help lower inflammation in the body and aid in weight loss.
- Increasing omega-3 fat intake from healthy, whole plant-based sources- not oils (e.g., walnuts and flax seeds).



For more info and to register, contact us at:  
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The VEGUARY challenge is designed by the members of PlantDiego! Look for upcoming special events, meal plans, local participating restaurant menus, shopping lists and tons of resources to get you started on a healthy whole food, plant-based lifestyle!