NEHC *NUTRI-FACTS*

Food Facts

MEAT, FISH, AND POULTRY

What nutrients do meat products contain?

These foods are high protein sources. Your body uses protein to build and repair itself. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins. Your body makes eleven of the twenty amino acids that are needed by the body and are considered nonessential. The remaining nine must be obtained from food and are therefore essential. These essential amino acids have to be part of your diet. Animal products, such as fish, poultry, cheese, meat, and milk, and soybean products are all sources of protein. Protein also serves as an energy source, although it's far less important in this respect than carbohydrates and fat.

Meat products also good sources of B vitamins, iron, and zinc. However, they also tend to be high in cholesterol, fat and calories, so consume in moderation. Omega-3 fatty acids, which are polyunsaturated fatty acids found mostly in cold-water fish, may help to lower the risk for heart disease.

What is the recommendation for meat, fish, and poultry for a healthy diet?

- **Eat 2-3 servings from the meat, fish, poultry, and dried bean group daily.**

- **Choose lean meats and poultry.** Leaner cuts of meat have less saturated fat. Saturated fat raises the blood cholesterol level, therefore saturated fat should be limited in the diet.

- **Eat 2 or more servings of fish a week.** The American Heart Association recommends at least 2 servings of fish a week. Best choices include salmon, tuna, mackerel, and herring.

What is the recommended serving size for meat, fish, and poultry?

The serving size is two to three ounces of meat. This is about the size of a deck of cards or the size of the palm of your hand. The following may be substituted for 1 ounce of meat:

Food	***Serving size***
Cooked legumes or dried beans	1/2 cup
Tofu	1/2 cup
Eggs	1 large
Nuts	1/3 cup

CHOOSING HEALTHY MEAT, POULTRY, AND FISH

What are some tips for choosing healthier and leaner cuts of meat and poultry?

Selecting beef and pork:

- **Choose lean cuts, such as pork loin chops, tenderloin, or sirloin.** Lean cuts of beef include sirloin, round, loin, and chuck. Leaner cuts of pork are tenderloin and loin chop.

- **Choose USDA Choice or USDA Select grades for beef rather than USDA Prime**. The USDA Prime usually has more fat content.

- **Avoid meat that is heavily marbled.** Choose meat with the least amount of visible fat.

- **Check labels on ground meat.** Choose ground beef with the lowest percentage of fat --- 15 percent fat or lower.

Selecting poultry:

- **Choose lean cuts.** The leanest choice is the white meat from the breast of the chicken or turkey without the skin. Even though skinless dark meat is also lean, it has almost twice the amount of fat calories than white meat.
- **Choose low fat ground chicken or turkey.** Ground turkey or chicken may have just has much fat as ground beef has, or even more, because it includes dark meat and skin. Carefully read the label before purchasing.

What brands should you select for healthy lunchmeats?

Look for products with “healthy” or “low fat” on the label. Check out the following products, but do not limit to just those listed. Read the label to determine if it fits the “healthy criteria.”

Jordan’s Turkey Breast
Tyson 98% Fat Free Turkey Breast
Healthy Choice 97% Fat Free Ham
Hillshire Farm 99% Fat Free Turkey
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