

Doctors Direct Healthcare, Inc.

# Taking Care of Your Heart

## When "Healthy" Foods Aren't So Healthy



### Special points of interest:

- Take your medication
- Keep your doctor appointments
- Get your flu shot
- Kidneys checked yearly
- Don't forget your yearly well visits
- Check your blood pressure at least quarterly
- Cholesterol panel checked twice a year

*If you have heart disease, or high cholesterol, or high blood pressure, or maybe you are at risk for developing it, you often struggle to make healthy food choices. With our hectic lifestyles, we have to make choices on the fly and we rely on the integrity of products and advertising and packaging to help us make the best choices. Unfortunately, some obvious choices are not the best ones. I have gathered some of the most frequent offenders.*

### 1. Prepared Salads

Don't assume that anything with the word "salad" in it must be healthy. Prepared tuna salads, chicken salads, and shrimp salads are often loaded with hidden fats and calories due to their high mayonnaise content. While a lot depends on portion size and ingredients, an over-stuffed tuna sandwich can contain as many as 700 calories and 40 grams of fat. If you're ordering out, opt for prepared salads made with low-fat mayonnaise, and keep the portion to about the size of a deck of cards. Better yet, make your own.

### 2. Multi-Grain and Wheat Breads

Terms like multi-grain, 7-grain, and wheat sound healthy, but they may not actually contain heart-healthy whole grains. Many breads labeled "multi-grain" and "wheat" are typically made with refined grains, so you're not getting the full nutritional benefit of the whole grain. How can you be sure? Read nutrition labels carefully. If the first flour in the ingredient list is refined (it will typically say "bleached" or "unbleached enriched wheat flour") you are not getting a 100 percent whole-grain bread.

### 3. Reduced-Fat Peanut Butter

Reduced-fat peanut butter is not necessarily a healthier version of regular peanut butter. Read the labels to see why. Both regular and reduced-fat peanut butter contain about the same amount of calories, but the reduced-fat variety has more sugar. But isn't it healthy to reduce some fat? Not in this case. Regular peanut butter is a natural source of the "good" monounsaturated fats. Look for a natural peanut butter with an ingredient list that contains no added oils. Better yet, find a store where you can grind your own, or make your own nut butters at

### *Questions?*

Please call us at 1.877.503.0388 Ext. 1 ask to speak with one of our nurses.

***Please visit our website! [www.doctorsdirecthealthcare.net](http://www.doctorsdirecthealthcare.net)***



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### 4. 'Energy' Bars

Energy bars are the perfect pre-workout snack, right? Not always. Many energy bars are filled with high fructose corn syrup, added sugar, and artery-clogging saturated fat. Plus, some bars (particularly meal replacement varieties) contain more than 350 calories each—a bit more than "snack size" for most people. It is a good idea to fuel up with a mix of high quality carbs and protein before an extended workout or hike. Choose wisely: one-quarter cup of trail mix, or 1.5 ounces of low-fat cheese and three to four small whole-grain crackers. Or, make your own healthy granola bars and trail mix.

### 5. Bran Muffins

Most bran muffins, even those sold at delis and coffee shops, are made with generally healthy ingredients. The problem is portion size. Many muffins sold in stores today dwarf the homemade muffins made a generation ago. A random sampling of some coffee and restaurant chain bran muffins showed that many topped 350 calories apiece, and that's before any butter or jam. The bran muffins at one popular chain bakery contain 600mg of sodium—roughly one-third of a day's maximum. Even a healthful food, if over-consumed, can be not-so-healthful. Enjoy your bran muffin, but just eat half, and save the rest for an afternoon snack. If you want to save money and calories, bake your own.

### 6. Smoothies

Even in most smoothie chains and coffee bars, smoothies start out pretty healthful. Most have a base of blended fruit and low-fat dairy. But disproportionately large serving sizes (the smallest is often 16 ounces) combined with added sugar, ice cream, or sherbet, can add up to a high-calorie treat. Some chains serve smoothies that contain up to 500 calories. A smoothie can be a great way to start the day or to refuel after a workout. Just remember to account for the calories you drink when considering what you've consumed in a day. For the most economical and healthy smoothies, consider making your own.

### 7. Packaged Turkey

Turkey is an excellent source of lean protein and a good choice for a speedy lunch or dinner, but many packaged turkey slices are loaded with sodium. One 2-ounce serving of some brands contains nearly one-third of the maximum recommended daily sodium intake. So make sure you buy low-sodium varieties or opt for fresh turkey slices. If you can't roast your own, the best rule of thumb is to find a brand with less than 350 milligrams of sodium per 2-ounce serving.

### 8. Foods Labeled 'Fat-Free'

Fat-free does NOT mean calorie-free. Just because a food contains no fat, that doesn't make it a health food. (Think gummy bears.) Of course, there are many very healthful fat-free foods (like most fruits and vegetables), but always check the nutrition labels when buying packaged foods to be sure you're getting a nutritious product and not just one that's fat-free. Calories, sodium, fiber, and vitamins and minerals are all aspects you should consider in addition to fat.