

Great Expectations[®]

FOR HEALTH

A BlueChoice HealthPlan newsletter for
members with heart disease and heart failure

Spring 2009

Cardiac Newsletter

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Taking Charge of Your Heart Health

The physical activity and eating habits of most Americans are cause for concern. Poor diet and inactivity are troubling because these habits can lead to high cholesterol, obesity and other heart disease risks.

For children, the effects of an unhealthy lifestyle are even more worrisome as prolonged damage to the heart can lead to a less satisfying life or shortened life spans.

Fortunately, these heart disease risks can be prevented and even reversed with a healthy lifestyle. Our goal at BlueChoice HealthPlan is to empower everyone to experience how just a few small steps can lead to a healthier lifestyle and healthy weight for life.

While obesity rates are on the rise, making two small changes can help keep you from adding the one to two pounds that most American adults gain each year.

These changes are:

- **Eat Healthy** – Reduce your calorie intake by just 100 calories each day (Page 2).
- **Move More** – Take 2,000 additional steps every day (Page 3).

Even if you are at a healthy weight, it's still important that you eat a heart-healthy diet and exercise to reduce your chances for high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Please talk with your doctor before beginning any new exercise or diet program.



How to Cut 100 Calories a Day

Maintaining a healthy weight is all about calories-in versus calories-out. You can better balance the calories you burn and those you consume with some simple steps. Small changes in the types of foods you eat and your portion sizes can quickly add up to 100 reduced calories. Find out how you can cut calories with this list of ideas.

Breakfast

- Select nonfat (skim) or 1% milk instead of whole milk.
- Select a small glass (4-6 oz.) for your juice and a small bowl for your cereal.
- Substitute a no-calorie sweetener for sugar in your coffee, tea and cereal.
- Savor a bowl of bananas, berries, low-fat milk and sugar substitute and bypass the traditional bacon and eggs.
- Choose light yogurt made with a no-calorie sweetener.
- Split a bagel with someone or save the other half for tomorrow's breakfast.
- Use a nonstick skillet and cooking spray in place of butter or margarine when preparing eggs.
- Try turkey sausage or Canadian bacon, which has less fat than traditional breakfast products.

Snacks

- Try frozen fruit wedges or grapes for a popsicle-like treat.
- Blend a smoothie out of yogurt, low-fat milk and fresh fruit.
- Control portions by pouring a serving of pretzels into a bowl instead of eating straight from the bag.
- Try baked chips in place of regular.
- Pick a small piece of fruit (size of a tennis ball), or eat just half of a bigger piece of fruit.

Beverages

- Substitute diet soda for regular soda.
- Pay attention to serving sizes; most soda cans contain two servings.
- Quench your thirst with water instead of vending machine drinks.
- Opt for the small or medium drink size.
- Choose no-sugar-added fruit juices.

Lunch/Dinner

- Use a small amount of fat-free or light mayonnaise to prepare tuna salad.
- Pick water-packed tuna, not oil-packed.
- Grill your sandwich with nonstick cooking spray, not butter.
- Use whole-wheat bread for sandwiches.
- Enjoy your salad *without* croutons.
- Substitute reduced calorie salad dressing for regular.
- Trim the fat from meats and remove the skin from chicken.
- Bake, broil or grill your chicken and fish rather than frying.
- Leave three to four bites on your plate.
- Eat slowly to reduce your urge for second helpings.
- If you have to eat fast food, pick items from the kid's menu for smaller portions and half the calories.
- When eating out, share your entree with a friend, or immediately put half of the meal in a take home box.



Desserts

- Satisfy your sweet tooth with a bite of dessert instead of a full portion.
- Have a single-scoop ice cream cone, instead of several scoops.
- Top angel food cake with berries and low-calorie whipped cream.
- Freeze blended fresh fruit into a sorbet for a refreshing dessert.
- Select a cupcake rather than a standard slice of cake.
- Share your dessert with someone.

Add 2,000 Steps to Your Days

It's not just what you eat that's important, but how you use the calories you take in. As long as you are active enough to balance the calories you eat with those you burn, you can enjoy an occasional treat and still avoid weight gain. Small changes in your daily activity can quickly add up to 2,000 extra steps or more!

At Home

- Make several trips up and down your stairs while doing laundry and other household chores.
- Invite friends or family to join you for a walk.
- Accompany your child or grandchild on the walk to school.
- Pace or march in place while talking on the phone or watching TV.
- Keep a walking journal to track your steps. Also, write down how you feel after walking – having more energy is a great motivator to keep you exercising.

At Work

- Go for a walk before starting your morning commute; you'll feel energized the rest of the day.
- Refill your coffee cup at the machine farthest from your workstation.
- Walk for 10 minutes during your lunch break.
- Climb the stairs or walk for a few minutes at the end of your work day.
- Instead of calling your coworker, walk to his or her cubicle, office or work station.

At Play

- Park your vehicle further away at the grocery store or the mall.
- Instead of chatting on the phone, meet friends for a walk and talk.
- Walk with your kids to the local park.
- Then, stroll around the track: four laps equals 2,000 steps.

Making Time in '09

Lack of free time is the number one reason most people give for not being physically active.

If you're like most people, you are busy, making it difficult to find time to fit in fitness. But making time for fitness doesn't have to be hard!

All you need is 30 minutes or more of exercise on most days. You can walk, ride a bicycle, rake leaves, mow the lawn or even play with the kids.

And you don't have to do all 30 minutes at once. You can add up 10- or 15-minute segments throughout the day.

Talk with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.

Need help losing extra weight?

Being inactive or overweight can seriously increase your risk of a number of dangerous health conditions. But we understand that changing your eating and exercise habits can be tough. That's why the Great Expectations **Weight Management** program provides information and resources to help you work toward the weight that is best for you.

For years we've been helping members with online tools and information, as well as access to many value-added discounts for community weight loss programs, such as Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers.

And now we're teaming up with the American Institute of Preventive Medicine, an independent company that offers health management programs and materials to bring you an enhanced weight management program. Through BlueChoice HealthPlan, you have the opportunity to join a self-paced weight loss plan.

Program participants receive:

- A comprehensive information kit which includes a workbook that guides you through a 10-week, self-paced program, healthy menus and recipes, a resistance exercise band, and a CD of relaxation exercises.
- Unlimited access to a weight loss coach who will work with you to get started. Your coach will also be available at any point along the way.

As a member of the Great Expectations **Cardiac** program, you can enroll in our weight management program at a discounted rate of \$5. To enroll, contact us at 800-327-3183, ext. 25576. Learn more at BlueChoiceSC.com. Select *Health & Wellness*, then Great Expectations for Health, **Weight Management**.



Other Activities

To stay fit, you must work your heart and muscles.

Try for 30 minutes of aerobic exercise five times a week. You should also work your major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, stomach, chest, shoulders, and arms) at least twice a week. Ideas for these exercises are listed below.

Aerobic

- Brisk walking
- Swimming
- Doubles tennis

Strength Training

- Weight lifting
- Using resistance bands
- Heavy gardening
- Yoga
- Floor exercises, like push-ups and sit-ups

Always stretch your muscles after doing either type of physical activity.

Source: cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html



Good-for-You Cornbread — 10 servings

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup cornmeal
1 cup flour
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup low-fat buttermilk
1 egg, whole
1/4 cup regular margarine (**select a trans-fat free variety**)
1 teaspoon vegetable oil (to grease pan)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix cornmeal, flour, sugar and baking powder.
3. In another bowl, combine buttermilk and egg. Beat lightly.
4. Add buttermilk/egg mixture to dry ingredients.
5. Add margarine and mix by hand.
6. Bake for 20–25 minutes in an 8 x 8-inch, greased baking dish. Cool.

Chicken Salad — 5 servings

INGREDIENTS:

3 cups chicken breast, cooked, cubed and skinless
1/4 cup celery, chopped
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp onion powder
1/8 tsp salt
3 Tbsp mayonnaise, low-fat

DIRECTIONS:

1. Bake chicken, cut into cubes.
2. In a large bowl combine other ingredients, add chicken and mix well.

Serve on whole-wheat bread or with vegetables.

Turkey Meatloaf — 5 servings

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound **lean** ground turkey
1/2 cup regular oats, dry
1 large egg
1 Tbsp onion, dehydrated flakes
1/4 cup low-sodium ketchup

DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine all ingredients and mix well.
2. Bake in a loaf pan at 350 degrees for 25 minutes, or until the loaf reaches an internal temperature of 165 degrees.
3. Cut into five slices and serve.

Tangy Fruit Salad — 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

2 Tbsp instant sugar-free pudding mix
1 cup light vanilla yogurt
1 15-ounce can pineapple chunks, drained
1 11-ounce can mandarin oranges, drained
1 cup grapes
2 medium bananas, sliced

DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine pudding mix and yogurt. Mix fruit in medium bowl.
2. Stir fruit into yogurt mixture.
3. Refrigerate. Serve chilled.

Other healthy family recipes can be found on the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Web site, under Recipes for Healthy Eating at nhlbi.nih.gov.

Comfort Foods Are OK – In Moderation

No matter what your family background, most of us have warm memories of enjoying home-cooked meals that nourish our bodies and our souls.

But these foods tend to be high in fat and carbohydrates, whether it's macaroni and cheese, lasagna, cornbread, BBQ pork, beef stew or homemade breads, pies and cakes.

However, changing a few ingredients and watching your portion sizes can really cut your fat intake and help lower your risk of heart disease.

To control portion sizes, think of your plate as being divided into three parts – half of the plate for vegetables, a fourth for your carbohydrates (carbs) or starchy foods (breads), and the last fourth for meat.

When loading up on your vegetables, think non-starchy. You want salad with light dressing, broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes and cauliflower.

If you can't resist a piece of your grandma's cornbread, lay off the other breads or starches, including casseroles. Vegetable casseroles are usually made with bread crumbs, rice and cream-based soups. You don't want your vegetables to end up being a fatty carb.

Also, remember that some vegetables can be especially starchy. Corn, peas and potatoes belong on the carb side of your plate along with other "good" carbs, like brown rice and whole-grain pasta.

The last spot on your plate is reserved for lean protein. While protein keeps your body going, some meats are loaded with saturated fat. So, only eat one serving. An average serving of meat is three to four ounces or about the size of a deck of cards, or the palm of your hand.

The "portion by plate" trick works great when you are celebrating, and want to indulge. It's also helpful during everyday eating. But dividing your plate doesn't mean you should have second helpings or forget about portion sizes.

Unsure of a serving size? Check out these guidelines:

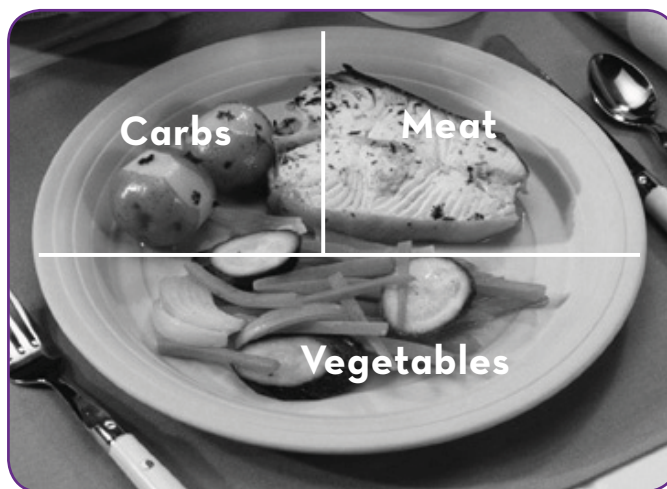
- 1 cup of rice, pasta or ice cream – tennis ball
- 1 ounce of cheese – a domino
- Medium piece of fruit – baseball
- Small baked potato – computer mouse
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter, jam or dressing – golf ball
- 1 teaspoon butter or margarine – a die
- 1 ounce chocolate – packet of dental floss

In addition to cutting the amount of food you eat, changing how you cook can also help keep your heart healthy.

When preparing meats, it's best to broil, steam, roast, bake or grill. While you should limit fried foods, you can make crispy fish or chicken.

For fish, roll in cornmeal and bake. To make old-fashioned but healthy fried chicken, first remove the skin. Then dip the meat in a wash of skim milk and herbs and spices. Roll the wet meat in bread crumbs, cornflakes or potato flakes, then bake.

Use trans-fat free margarine or olive oil to cook. Skipping the butter will cut back on saturated fat.



If you are a baker, try replacing your fatty shortenings with applesauce when making cakes and cookies. Applesauce will keep your sweets moist. You can also cut the fat in your baked goods by using fewer egg yolks (the yellow) and more egg whites. For example, if a recipe calls for two whole eggs, use three egg whites and one yolk.

To control blood pressure, try cutting back on the amount of sodium you put on cooked foods. You can also season your meats with herbs and spices instead of salt. Read the nutrition labels on packaged foods to make sure you're not taking in more than 2,400 milligrams of salt each day.

Source: American Diabetes Association; diabetes.org/nutrition-and-recipes/nutrition/rate-your-plate.jsp;

Source: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute; nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/chdblack/cooking.pdf



South Carolina

Post Office Box 6170
Columbia, SC 29260-6170

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Do you have questions about your BlueChoice HealthPlan coverage? Try our Web site at www.BlueChoiceSC.com. We're open 24 hours a day here!

*Member Services Phone Numbers:
(803) 786-8476 or 1-800-868-2528
8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Monday - Friday*

E-mail: BlueChoice.SC@BlueChoiceSC.com



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