

## **Heart Healthy, Sodium Restricted Guidelines: 1500 to 2000 mg sodium a day**

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# Heart Healthy, Sodium Restricted Guidelines: 1500 to 2000 mg sodium a day

## Why should I eat heart healthy?

- Heart healthy eating can give you energy and help you feel better.
- Eating more fibre and less fat can lower your risk of heart disease by helping to control:
  - › Your weight
  - › Your blood pressure
  - › Your cholesterol
  - › Diabetes
- Eating less sodium (salt) can help to manage heart failure and high blood pressure.

## How do I eat heart healthy?

- Canada's Food Guide can help you choose healthy foods and keep healthy eating habits. Try to eat balanced meals and choose a mix of foods from each food group every day.
  - › [www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-guide.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-guide.html)

Have plenty  
of vegetables  
and fruits

Eat protein  
foods



Make water  
your drink  
of choice



Choose whole  
grain foods

- Limit sugar, candy, and desserts.
- Limit caffeine (like coffee and energy drinks).
- Talk to your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) about alcohol.
- Keep a healthy body weight by being active and eating healthy.
- Ask your health care provider or dietitian about the **Mediterranean diet**.
  - › The Mediterranean diet focuses on plant-based foods with little processing, healthy fats, and enjoying meals with others. This diet has been shown to lower the risk of heart disease.

## Reading food labels

- Read food labels carefully for sodium, fat, and fibre content. Be sure to also look for the serving size.
- Most labels show:
  - › mg (milligrams) of sodium
  - › g (grams) of fat and fibre
  - › % DV (percent daily value) of each
- Compare different products and choose those with less sodium and fat, and more fibre. Avoid foods with a % DV of more than:
  - › 10% for sodium
  - › 15% for total fat

## **Fat-free or low fat**

- “Cholesterol-free” does not mean fat-free or low in fat. Sometimes, a product may be labelled “cholesterol-free” to make it sound like a healthier choice and encourage you to buy it.
  - › For example, “cholesterol-free” French fries never had any cholesterol at all, but they do have a lot of fat.
- “Light” does not always mean low in fat or calories. It may mean the food is light in colour, flavour, or texture (how it feels). Read the label closely to see why it is called “light”.
- Check the ingredient list to make sure there are no hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats.
- Choose foods with less than 5% DV of total fat (including saturated fat).
- Choose foods with 0 g of trans fat **and** 0 g of hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats.

## **Fibre**

- Look for foods with:
  - › More than 15% DV of fibre

**or**

  - › More than 3 grams of fibre a serving.

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.**

## Low sodium

- “Less salt” or “no added salt/sodium” does not always mean something is low in salt.
- Look for foods labelled “salt-free” or “low sodium”.
- Choose foods with a % DV of sodium of less than 5% or less than 120 mg sodium a serving.

### Example of a high sodium food to avoid

#### Sample label for macaroni and cheese

1. Check serving size and calories.

2. Limit fats and check for high sodium.

3. Get enough of these nutrients and vitamins.

4. Check the details in the footnotes.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Servings Per Container 2			
<hr/>			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110		
<hr/>			
			% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g			18%
Saturated Fat 3g			15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 1.5g			
Cholesterol 30mg			10%
<b>Sodium 470mg</b>			<b>20%</b>
Total Carbohydrate 31g			10%
Dietary Fiber 0g			0%
Sugars 5g			
Protein 5g			
<hr/>			
Vitamin A			4%
Vitamin C			2%
Calcium			20%
Iron			4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Choose more of the foods from the “Best choices” list and less from the foods to “Avoid” list to start eating heart healthy.

### Fruits and vegetables

- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. They make a great low fat snack.
- Limit processed fruits and vegetables. See below for examples.

Best choices	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh vegetables</li> <li>• Frozen vegetables without seasoning or sauces</li> <li>• Canned vegetables without salt</li> <li>• Tomato sauce or paste, or canned tomatoes with no added salt (like Hunt’s® No Salt Added Tomato Sauce)</li> <li>• Low sodium vegetable juices</li> <li>• Fresh, frozen, or canned fruit</li> <li>• Unsweetened fruit juice, no more than ½ cup (125 ml)</li> <li>• Dried fruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned vegetables with added salt</li> <li>• Frozen vegetables in sauces or seasonings that include salt</li> <li>• Canned vegetables with added salt</li> <li>• Frozen vegetables in sauces</li> <li>• Pickles, other pickled vegetables</li> <li>• Canned or bottled pasta and pizza sauces</li> <li>• Vegetable juices with salt (like tomato, Clamato®, V8®)</li> <li>• Dried potato mixes (like scalloped or mashed)</li> <li>• Deep-fried French fries or fried potatoes (baked potatoes with no added salt are OK)</li> <li>• Vegetables with cheese or cream sauces</li> <li>• Vegetables seasoned with salt</li> <li>• Canned or dried fruit with added salt</li> <li>• Fermented vegetables (like sauerkraut and kimchi)</li> <li>• Seaweed</li> </ul>

## Grain products

- For breads and cereals, choose whole grain more often than refined (white). Whole grain products have more fibre. Fibre helps to:
  - › Keep you feeling full
  - › Lower cholesterol levels
  - › Control blood sugar levels
- The first ingredient on the ingredient list should have the words “whole grain” followed by the name of the grain.
  - › If you have Celiac disease or a wheat allergy, talk to your dietitian about other grain options that are high in fibre.
- **Look for breads, cereals, and crackers with less than 8% DV of sodium.**
- Watch for sodium, hidden fats, and trans fats in bakery or grocery store items (like muffins, biscuits, croissants, cookies, crackers, and “ready to eat” meals).

Best choices	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yeast breads, pita breads, bagels — Choose whole grain products more often.</li> <li>• Homemade muffins, waffles, pancakes, and biscuits without added salt that use heart healthy fats — be careful how many you have if you are trying to lose weight.</li> <li>• Whole wheat or whole grain, unsalted crackers</li> <li>• Dry cereals made without salt (like Post® Shredded Wheat™ Original, puffed wheat, Kellogg’s® Mini-Wheats® Cereal)</li> <li>• Cooked cereals made without salt</li> <li>• Pasta (like macaroni or spaghetti) — try whole wheat pasta.</li> <li>• Rice — try brown or wild rice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheese bread, egg bread, white bread</li> <li>• Store-bought baking mixes (like cake, pancake, muffin, or biscuit mixes)</li> <li>• Pre-seasoned pasta mixes (like Hamburger Helper®, KD [Kraft® Dinner], Knorr® Sidekicks®)</li> <li>• Canned pasta</li> <li>• Instant hot cereals</li> <li>• Bread stuffing mixes</li> <li>• Seasoned crumb coating (like Kraft® Shake ‘n Bake)</li> <li>• Store-bought baked products</li> <li>• Salted crackers made with white flour</li> <li>• Pre-seasoned rice</li> <li>• Mr. Noodles and other instant soups</li> </ul>

## Protein foods: milk and alternatives

- Choose unsweetened, lower fat, lower sodium dairy products.
- Use only small amounts of non-hydrogenated margarine. Salt-free is best.
- Use vegetable oil instead of solid fats (like butter, margarine), if possible.
- Choose drinks with no more than 5% DV of sodium, fat, and saturated fat.

Best choices	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk (skim, 0.5%, or 1%)</li> <li>• Fortified (have nutrients added), unsweetened, low fat soy, rice, or almond drinks</li> <li>• Yogurt (less than 1.4% MF [milk fat])</li> <li>• Cheese:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Light cream cheese</li> <li>› Low fat cheeses with up to 10% DV of sodium. <b>Do not</b> eat more than 30 g (1 oz) a day.</li> <li>› Unsalted, low fat cottage cheese</li> <li>› Low fat bocconcini</li> <li>› Low fat ricotta</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evaporated skim milk</li> <li>• Frozen yogurt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full fat dairy products (like cream, butter, 2% or whole milk)</li> <li>• Processed cheese spreads (like Kraft® Cheez Whiz)</li> <li>• Processed cheese slices</li> <li>• Blue, feta, Romano, and Parmesan cheeses</li> <li>• Chocolate milk and other flavoured milks</li> <li>• Malted milk</li> <li>• Buttermilk</li> <li>• Milkshakes</li> <li>• Cottage cheese</li> <li>• Ready-made and instant milk puddings</li> <li>• Condensed milk with more than 2% MF</li> <li>• Hot chocolate mixes</li> <li>• Eggnog</li> <li>• Ice cream and frozen desserts that are high in fat</li> </ul>

## Protein foods: meat and plant-based proteins

- Choose plant-based proteins more often.
- Choose lean cuts of meat and use low fat cooking methods (like baking, barbecuing, broiling, or roasting).

Best choices	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat fresh or frozen fish (especially salmon, mackerel, trout, or herring) 2 to 3 times a week</li> <li>• Plain, fresh, or frozen:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Chicken or turkey (white meat)</li> <li>› Lean beef, pork, lamb</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Canned tuna or salmon packed in water — rinse before eating.</li> <li>• Eggs, egg whites</li> <li>• Unsalted, dry roasted nuts and seeds (like almonds, peanuts, walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, sunflower seeds)</li> <li>• Dried or frozen pulses (beans, chickpeas, peas, lentils) without seasonings</li> <li>• No added salt, canned chickpeas and beans</li> <li>• Natural nut butters (like peanut, almond) without salt or sweeteners (like sugar)</li> <li>• Frozen meals with less than 10% DV of sodium and less than 15% DV of fat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All meat, fish, and poultry (like chicken, turkey) that has been smoked, cured, pickled, salted, or dried, like:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Bacon, bologna, corned beef, ham, kosher meats, lunch meats, sausages, wieners, sardines, salt cod, smoked herring</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Canned meats</li> <li>• Frozen meals</li> <li>• Frozen meat pies</li> <li>• Frozen, breaded fish or chicken</li> <li>• Canned beans</li> <li>• Canned stews</li> <li>• Salted nuts and seeds</li> <li>• Regular peanut and other nut butters</li> <li>• Pizza</li> <li>• Chinese food</li> </ul>

## Fats

- **Do not** eat more than 2 to 3 Tbsp (30 to 45 ml) of added fat a day.

<b>Best choices</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soft, salt-free, non-hydrogenated margarine (like Becel™ Salt-Free)</li><li>• Canola, olive, or sunflower oils</li><li>• Salt-free salad dressing (see recipe on page 17)</li><li>• Low sodium mayonnaise</li><li>• Salt-free, low fat homemade gravy</li><li>• Vegetable oil cooking sprays</li><li>• Avocados</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Butter</li><li>• Lard</li><li>• Bacon fat and salt pork</li><li>• Shortening and hard margarines — these are hydrogenated.</li><li>• Cocoa butter</li><li>• Palm and coconut oils (regular and hydrogenated)</li><li>• Most store-bought salad dressings — check the ingredient list.</li><li>• Store-bought dips</li><li>• Canned gravy and gravy mixes</li></ul>

## Soups

<b>Best choices</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unsalted soups and broths</li><li>• Canned soups with 10% or less DV of sodium</li><li>• Homemade soups with no added salt</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular canned soups</li><li>• Dried soup mixes, bouillon (like Oxo®), consommé</li><li>• Split pea soup made with ham bone</li><li>• Bean and bacon soup</li></ul>

## Other foods

Best choices	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water, mineral water</li> <li>• Diet pop</li> <li>• Sherbet</li> <li>• Postum<sup>®</sup>, Ovaltine<sup>®</sup></li> <li>• Coffee, tea</li> <li>• Ground flaxseeds</li> <li>• Low sugar jams and jellies (like E. D. Smith<sup>®</sup> Triple Fruits<sup>®</sup> or Smucker's<sup>®</sup> Double Fruit<sup>®</sup>)</li> <li>• Herbs</li> <li>• Spices without salt</li> <li>• Salt-free seasoning blends (like Dash<sup>™</sup>, McCormick<sup>®</sup> or PC<sup>®</sup> Blue Menu<sup>™</sup> No Salt Added)</li> <li>• Vinegar</li> <li>• Tabasco<sup>®</sup> sauce</li> <li>• Air-popped popcorn without salt</li> <li>• Cream of tartar</li> <li>• Cocoa</li> <li>• Baking powder and baking soda in small amounts</li> <li>• No more than 1 tsp (5 ml) a day (total) with less than 5% DV of sodium of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Worcestershire sauce</li> <li>› Ketchup</li> <li>› Relish</li> <li>› Mustard</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water treated with a salt-based water softener</li> <li>• Sports drinks (like Gatorade<sup>®</sup> or Powerade<sup>®</sup>)</li> <li>• Regular pop</li> <li>• Sugar, honey, corn syrup, maple syrup, molasses, regular jams and jellies</li> <li>• Salt, sea salt, artisan salts, Ac'cent<sup>®</sup> Flavor Enhancer</li> <li>• Celery salt</li> <li>• Garlic salt</li> <li>• Onion salt</li> <li>• Seasoning blends that have salt or sodium</li> <li>• Pickles</li> <li>• Olives</li> <li>• Soy sauce, light soy sauce</li> <li>• Hoisin, teriyaki, and oyster sauces</li> <li>• Salsa, picante, and taco sauces</li> <li>• Poultry and meat coatings</li> <li>• Potato and nacho chips</li> <li>• Hawkins Cheezies<sup>®</sup>, pretzels</li> <li>• Popcorn with salt, microwave popcorn</li> <li>• Party mix</li> </ul>

## Fluids

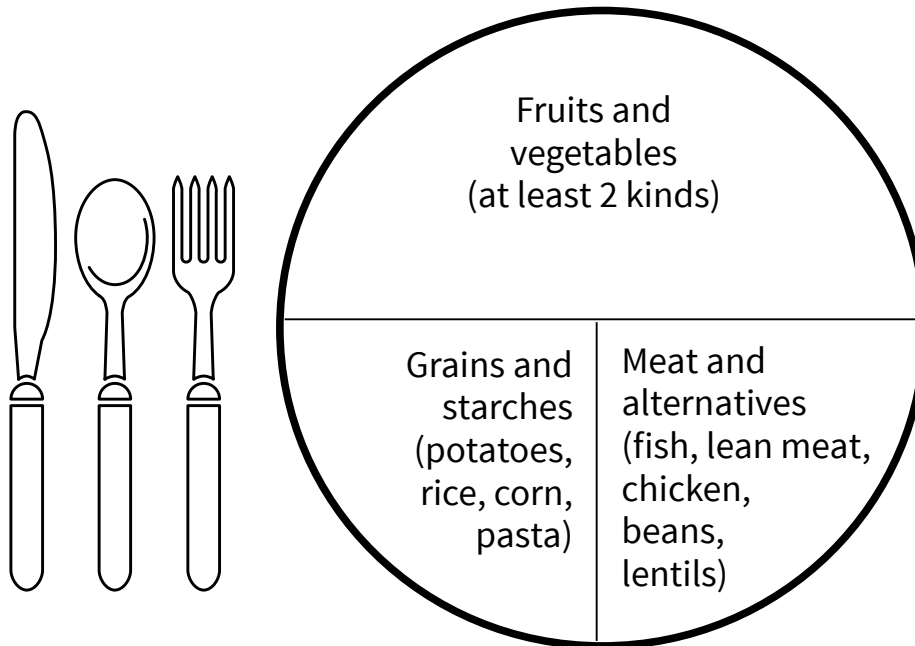
- You may need to limit how much fluid you drink each day if:
  - › You have heart failure
  - › You are on a fluid restriction
- Your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) will tell you how much fluid you should have each day.
- Keep track of:
  - › The amount of fluids you drink (including water, milk, juice, pop, coffee, tea, and alcohol)
  - › Any foods you eat that would be liquid at room temperature (like ice cubes, popsicles, ice cream, yogurt, sherbet, soups, and Jell-O®)
- For more information, ask your dietitian for a copy of pamphlet 0127, *Managing Fluid Intake*, scan the QR code below, or visit:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0127](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0127)

Scan the QR code below on your device  
(open the camera on your device, point the  
camera at the code, and tap the banner or  
border that appears)



## Portion size

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. They are low in calories and fat, and high in fibre.
- To fill your plate at each meal:
  - ›  $\frac{1}{2}$  should be fruits and vegetables
  - ›  $\frac{1}{4}$  should be grains
  - ›  $\frac{1}{4}$  should be protein foods



## Cooking and baking

To make recipes heart healthy:

- Rinse well and drain canned vegetables and beans before using.
- Remove chicken skin and trim off any fat you can see on meats before cooking.
- **Do not** use salt in recipes for baking, soups, sauces, gravies, or casseroles.
- Lower the amount of salt in yeast bread recipes. To improve results, keep the dough more dry than usual and shorten the proofing (rising) time.
- Use non-hydrogenated margarine instead of butter, shortening, or lard.
- If a recipe calls for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a cup of fat, use only  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a cup.
- Choose recipes that use vegetable or canola oil instead of butter, margarine, lard, palm oil, coconut oil, or shortening.

- For muffin recipes that need more than ½ cup of oil, replace half of the oil with one of the following:
  - › Fruit juice
  - › Pureed fruit (like applesauce)
  - › Low fat yogurt
- Put juices from roast meats and poultry in the fridge until the fat rises to the top. Then skim the fat off before making gravy.
- Instead of sautéing with fats, use:
  - › Water
  - › Juice
  - › Low sodium broth
  - › Wine
  - › Vegetable oil cooking spray
- Use less meat or cheese than a recipe calls for.

## Omega-3 fatty acids

- Omega-3 fatty acids are fats that your body needs to stay healthy. They can help lower the risk of heart disease.
- **The best way to get omega-3 fatty acids is by eating fish.**
  - › You should have 1 g of omega-3 fatty acids a day.
  - › To do this, have 5 to 6 oz of fresh or frozen fish **at least 2 times a week.** Salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring, and trout (not deep-fried, smoked, or salted) are best.
- Some other foods (like eggs, milk, yogurt, margarine, and some juices) are fortified with omega-3 fatty acids.
- If you think you are not getting enough omega-3 fatty acids, you may need to take a supplement. **Talk with your dietitian, primary health care provider, or pharmacist before taking an omega-3 supplement, especially if you are taking a blood thinner (like warfarin).**

## Flaxseeds

- Ground flaxseeds are very high in fibre and are a source of omega-3 fatty acids.
- Your body cannot use omega-3 fatty acids from whole flaxseeds. They **must** be ground.

### Ways to use flaxseeds:

- Sprinkle them on hot or cold cereal, yogurt, or applesauce.
- Add them to hamburgers, soups, or casseroles.
- Add them to muffin, bread, or loaf recipes.
- Replace 1 Tbsp of fat in a recipe with 3 Tbsp of ground flaxseeds.
- Replace 1 egg in a recipe with a mixture of 1 Tbsp of ground flaxseeds **plus** 3 Tbsp of water.
- You cannot use flaxseed oil for cooking, but it can be used in salad dressings or added to drinks.

### How to store flaxseeds:

- Store whole flaxseeds at room temperature in a clean, dry place for up to 1 year.
- Grind flaxseeds as needed and store them in an airtight container that you cannot see through. Keep it in the fridge or freezer for up to 30 days (1 month).
- Keep flaxseed oil in the fridge.

## Eating out

- Restaurant foods are often very high in fat and salt. Limit how often you eat out and try to choose healthy foods when you do. Some chain restaurants have nutritional information on their websites. You may want to check this information before you go.
- Choose a restaurant that cooks foods in many ways, not just by frying.
- Ask how a food is cooked. “Crispy” often means deep-fried. “Pan-fried” or “sautéed” means cooked in fat.
- Ask for sauces on the side and just use a little, or ask for no sauce. Sauces like béchamel, béarnaise, and hollandaise have a lot of fat.
- Ask if foods can be made without added salt. Avoid meals that have high fat and high salt ingredients (like bacon, sausage, cheese). Pickled, cured, or smoked meats are also high in salt.
- Watch out for salads. Caesar salad and “salad” items at a salad bar (like chicken salad, potato salad, pasta salad) are high in fat and salt.
  - › If you add chicken or seafood to a salad, make sure it is grilled instead of deep-fried.
  - › Ask for light salad dressing on the side and use only a small amount.
- Remove chicken skin and trim off any fat you can see on meats.
- For sandwiches or subs, order:
  - › The smallest size, not the foot-long
  - › Whole wheat bread or bun
  - › Plain, sliced chicken, turkey, or beef
  - › No cheese or light cheese
  - › Lots of vegetables
  - › A small amount of light dressing
  - › No added salt or seasonings with sodium (seasonings without sodium are OK)

## Resources

- **Health Canada**
  - › [www.canada.ca/en/services/health/food-nutrition.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/food-nutrition.html)
- **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada**
  - › [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)

## Cookbooks

- There are many cookbooks to help you plan heart healthy meals. You can find these in most libraries and bookstores.
- Try any cookbook by:
  - › Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
  - › Diabetes Canada
  - › Dietitians of Canada

## For nutrition counselling:

- Search online for: “NS health nutrition counselling” to see what services are in your community, or visit:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/nutrition-education-and-counselling-dietitians](http://www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/nutrition-education-and-counselling-dietitians)
- Registered dietitians work in some grocery stores. They offer many services, including store tours. Search online for “dietitian and (name of your grocery store)” or check with your local grocery store.

## Recipes

### Balsamic Vinaigrette

- › 1/3 cup (80 ml) onion, chopped
  - › 3 garlic cloves, minced
  - › 1/4 tsp (1 ml) pepper
  - › 3/4 cup (190 ml) balsamic vinegar
  - › 1/2 cup (125 ml) olive oil
  - › 2 Tbsp (30 ml) honey or maple syrup
  - › 2 tsp (10 ml) dry mustard **or**  
2 Tbsp (30 ml) Dijon mustard
- Combine all ingredients in a bowl and stir.

### In a 2 Tbsp serving:

Calories: 110

Sodium: 60 mg

Total fat: 10 g

Carbohydrates: 6 g

Saturated fat: 1 g

Protein: 0 g

### Salt-free Seasoning Blend

- › 2 Tbsp (30 ml) onion powder
  - › 2 tsp (10 ml) garlic powder
  - › 2 tsp (10 ml) paprika
  - › 2 tsp (10 ml) dry mustard
  - › 1 tsp (5 ml) thyme, crushed
  - › 1/2 tsp (2 ml) pepper
  - › 1/4 tsp (1 ml) dried parsley
- Combine all ingredients in a bowl and stir.
  - Use as desired.

Makes: about 1/3 cup (68 ml)

## Speedy Barbecue Sauce

- › 1 cup (250 ml) cider vinegar
- › ¾ cup (175 ml) no salt added, canned, crushed tomatoes
- › 3 Tbsp (45 ml) packed brown sugar
- › 1 Tbsp (15 ml) Worcestershire sauce
- › 2 tsp (10 ml) hot pepper sauce
- › 2 Tbsp (30 ml) chopped garlic

- Add ingredients to a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat.
- Lower heat and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring often.
- Remove from heat and cool slightly before using.

### In a 2 Tbsp serving:

Calories: 20

Sodium: 40 mg

Total fat: 0 g

Carbohydrates: 6 g

Saturated fat: 0 g

Protein: 0 g

**It can be hard to make changes to your eating habits.  
If you have any questions, please ask to talk with a  
dietitian. We are here to help you.**

Dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](https://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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