

Lisa R. Young, PhD, RD

Nutritionist's Picks...



Guilt-Free Chips

No one can claim that potato or tortilla chips are good for you. Fresh fruits and vegetables are hands-down a more healthful snack, but indulging in a modest portion of chips every now and then is OK if you choose the right brand. There now are many healthier potato and other sorts of chips on the market, but the problem is people can't stop eating them!

My advice: Before breaking open a bag of chips, check the label. The serving size (typically one ounce) is likely to be much smaller than the amount you usually eat. So pour out one serving, and put the bag back in the pantry.

What to look for in a one-ounce serving of chips...

Total fat—6 g or less

Saturated fat—1 g or less

Trans fat—0 g

Sodium—less than 150 mg

Fiber—at least 2 g

Calories—140 or less

My top picks...

FOOD SHOULD TASTE GOOD ALL NATURAL CHIPS, SWEET POTATO

Per one-ounce serving (about 12 chips): 6 g total fat...0.5 g saturated fat...0 g trans fat...80 mg sodium...3 g fiber...140 calories.

GARDEN OF EATIN' BAKED TORTILLA CHIPS, YELLOW

Per one-ounce serving (about 19 chips): 2 g total fat...0 g saturated fat...0 g trans fat...120 mg sodium...3 g fiber...120 calories.

KETTLE BRAND BAKED POTATO CHIPS, SEA SALT

Per one-ounce serving (about 20 chips): 3 g total fat...0.5 g saturated fat...0 g trans fat...135 mg sodium...2 g fiber...120 calories.

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Steven Nissen, MD
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Are You Doing Everything You Can to Prevent a Heart Attack?

Don't fall for these deadly myths...

You already know the best ways to prevent a heart attack—give up cigarettes if you smoke, get regular exercise, lose weight if you're overweight and prevent (or control) diabetes, high blood pressure (hypertension) and elevated cholesterol.

Yet millions of Americans continue to jeopardize their cardiovascular health by not fully understanding how to address these key risk factors.

Example: One common misconception is that you must do *hard* aerobic exercise to protect the heart. While it's true that people who increase the intensity and duration of their exercise may have greater reductions in cardiovascular disease, that doesn't mean you have to run on a treadmill or work up a sweat on a stair-climber to help your heart. A daily brisk walk (ideally, 30 minutes or more) will provide significant improvements in blood vessel function and heart-muscle efficiency.

Other misconceptions to avoid...

Misconception #1: Reducing dietary fat is the best way to control cholesterol. In the 1960s, the average American consumed about 45% of calories from fats and oils. After decades of warnings that a high-fat diet increased cholesterol, that percentage has dropped to about 33%.

That sounds like good news, but it's not. Research clearly shows that the best diet for improving cholesterol is *not* a low-fat diet.

Reasons: People who cut back on fat tend to reduce *all* fats in the diet, including *healthful* monounsaturated fats such as olive and canola oils. These fats improve the ratio of LDL "bad" cholesterol and HDL "good" cholesterol—a critical factor in reducing heart disease.

What to do: Cut back on saturated fat (ideally, less than 7% of total calories)—this fat *does* increase cholesterol. But also make sure that your diet includes plenty of healthful monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

In addition to olive and canola oils, foods that are high in monounsaturated fats include avocados, nuts and pumpkin and sesame seeds. We get most of our polyunsaturated fats from sunflower, corn, soybean and other oils. Foods containing polyunsaturated fats include walnuts, fish and flaxseed.

Important: Of course you should avoid *trans fats*—engineered fats that are commonly used in commercially made cookies, crackers and other baked goods, as well as in deep-fried fast food. It's been estimated that for every 2% of calories that are consumed daily in the form of trans fats, the risk for heart disease rises by as much as 23%!

Misconception #2: Blood pressure medication should be stopped

Bottom Line/Health interviewed Steven Nissen, MD, chairman of the Robert and Suzanne Tomsich Department of Cardiovascular Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic main campus. He is the editor of *Current Cardiology Reports* and senior consulting editor to the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. Dr. Nissen is coauthor, with Marc Gillinov, MD, of *Heart 411: The Only Guide to Heart Health You'll Ever Need* (Three Rivers).