

Heart healthy diets: A collaborative approach between provider & patient



Dietary changes are often a key component of any cardiac patient's care plan, but it can also be difficult for many to manage. It's important to have conversations with your patients to identify how they can be successful with improving their health while taking into consideration their unique needs. Be mindful of your patients' ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds when discussing lifestyles changes to ensure they are setup for success.

These conversation points may also be helpful when paired with a social need's screener. Referrals to community agencies could be especially impactful to help patients gain access to food they otherwise may not be able to afford or offer support that helps to foster continued success.

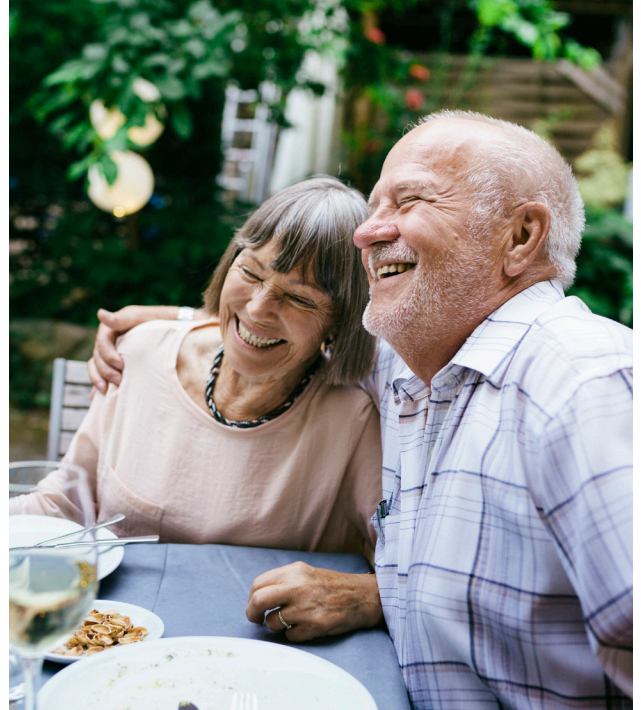
When discussing dietary changes with your patients, the following checklist may be used to guide your conversation. A great leading question to ask your patient could be, “What more would you like to share with me about your health, illness/condition, or diet?”

- **Does your patient have access to produce?**

- What tends to be readily available within their area?
- While fresh produce may be what comes to mind first, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables can be also great choices. Speak with your patients about reviewing nutrition labels and what to look for to follow recommended dietary guidelines. Hidden sodium levels can be a downfall for many.
- If the patient resides in an area without a nearby grocery store, speak with them about online options to order fruits and vegetables and connect them with local organizations that may be able to offer assistance.

- **Does your patient’s culture influence how they cook, eat, and/or view themselves?**

- If yes, be mindful that their culture may be different than your own. Use examples of compliant foods that they are familiar with. The DASH diet promotes the consumption of whole grains, like brown rice, and traditional foods, such as Spanish, Jasmine, or Basmati rice tend to be viewed as non-compliant. It’s important that you use specific examples that your patients are familiar with so they can be successful. **EatRight.Org** is a great resource to educate yourself on native foods for cultures across the globe.
- The patient may not see themselves as overweight due to their culture’s standards and perceptions. It’s important that you help the patient understand the impact their diet can have upon their heart health and that their outward appearance may not mean they are heart healthy.



- **Reiterate that eating a heart healthy diet doesn’t need to be expensive:**

- Encourage the purchase of frozen or canned fruits and vegetables and be mindful of hidden sodium by paying close attention to nutrition labels.
- The Mediterranean Diet guides followers to consume lean proteins and fish. Patients can reduce the cost of the meal plan by purchasing items such as canned salmon, which is often cheaper than fresh, to reduce their cost.

Learn more about Wellpoint programs
provider.wellpoint.com/

