

# Heart Health

More and more, we are seeing evidence of the important role food can play in supporting a healthy heart. A heart-healthy diet includes <sup>(1)</sup>:

Whole Grains	A variety of fruits and vegetables
Low-fat Dairy Foods	Lean poultry and fish
Nuts and Legumes	Non-tropical vegetable oils
Limiting saturated and trans fat, sodium and red meat	



**Whole grains** — and in particular oats — have been repeatedly shown to help promote heart health. There is a solid body of evidence for oats' role in lowering blood cholesterol, a risk factor for heart disease, thanks to the power of the soluble fiber called beta-glucan. This soluble fiber is largely unique to oats and may help lower blood cholesterol. Beta-glucan forms a gel in the gut, binding bile acids — a cholesterol-containing substance — which is then excreted before reaching the bloodstream. As a result, the liver pulls LDL cholesterol from the blood to replace the excreted bile acids, resulting in reduced blood cholesterol.



**Oatmeal** was the subject of the first food-specific health claim approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. This claim states, "Soluble fiber from oatmeal as a daily part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. Three grams daily are needed for this benefit." A ½ cup serving of Old Fashioned Quaker Oatmeal provides 2 grams of soluble fiber. To help your clients get the benefit from beta glucan, you can encourage them to mix oats into smoothies or incorporate into recipes throughout the day to increase the amount of soluble fiber to get at least 3 grams.

1. The American Heart Association's Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations [Internet]. The American Heart Association's Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations. 2017. Available from: [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/The-American-Heart-Associations-Diet-and-Lifestyle-Recommendations\\_UCM\\_305855\\_Article.jsp#.WdX-2rpFzIX](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/The-American-Heart-Associations-Diet-and-Lifestyle-Recommendations_UCM_305855_Article.jsp#.WdX-2rpFzIX)