

How's your heart health & those of your loved ones? Do you know your numbers for total cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL, LDL, and blood pressure? To keep your body healthy experts agree on shooting for the following levels: Cholesterol at or below 200mg/dl; Triglycerides at or below 200mg/dl; HDL (good cholesterol) 40 and above; LDL (bad cholesterol) less than 130, or less than 100 if you already have heart disease; and blood pressure of 120/80. The accepted recommendations to maintain or achieve these numbers and keep your heart healthy are to practice the following habits: avoid tobacco products and exposure to them; maintain a healthy weight; get 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise daily; eat a healthy diet; manage stress; aim for blood glucose levels of 100 mg/dl. What's considered a healthy weight is a BMI or body mass index between 19-25. By visiting www.mypyramid.gov you can calculate your BMI and learn about your nutrition needs. The American Heart Association recommends the following as a definition of a "healthy diet". Consume not more than 300 mg of cholesterol daily; consume 25-35% of your calories as fat, with less than 1% as trans fats, and less than 7 % as saturated fats; 15% of calories as lean protein and the remaining 50-60% as high fiber, complex carbohydrates; limit sodium intake to 2000mg daily. The foods which are kindest to your heart are oats, nuts, high fiber (20-35 gm daily) foods like fruits, vegetables and 100% whole grains, fish eaten at least twice weekly, plant sterols found in Benecol and Take Control margarines, flaxseed, and green tea. The foods most unkind are fried, processed, sugary, those high in cream, butter, organ meats, egg yolks, bacon, lunchmeat and wieners. So chose wisely for you, your Valentines and Superbowl company. For more information consult Healthy Directions of Poway at 858-335-2140.