Managing your blood cholesterol levels is important for a healthy heart. But doing so is about more than just cholesterol. Only a quarter of this waxy compound found in your bloodstream comes directly from food; the rest is manufactured by your liver from saturated fats and other nutrients in your diet. So, in addition to limiting cholesterol to no more than an average 300 milligrams (mg)/day, a heart-smart diet also should limit saturated fat content to no more than 7% of the day’s total calories. You also should strictly limit trans fat and keep sodium intake below 1,500 mg/day. Finally, be sure to include plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, and healthy fats from foods like nuts and avocado. How can you get started on this heart-wise way to eat? It's simple! Just try this 1,800-calorie/day, 7-day meal planner.

—Mindy Hermann

### DAY 1

**Breakfast**
- 1 cup oatmeal; top with 2 Tbsp walnuts, 1 tsp honey
- 1 medium banana
- 1 cup nonfat milk

**Lunch**
- 1 2-oz. whole-wheat tortilla topped with 1 cup shredded lettuce, ½ cup diced tomato, 1 cup salt-free canned black beans, ¼ cup diced avocado, ¼ cup shredded reduced-fat cheese, 2 Tbsp salsa

**Dinner**
- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 cup broccoli, sautéed in 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 cup lettuce, tossed with 1 tsp olive oil, vinegar to taste
- 3½ oz. grilled salmon
- ½ cup cantaloupe cubes

**Snack**
- 1 oz. whole-wheat pretzels with 2 tsp unsalted peanut butter
- 2 Tbsp raisins
- ¾ cup plain light or nonfat yogurt

**Nutritional Information**
- 1,870 calories
- 12 g saturated fat, 6% of total calories
- 0 trans fat
- 90 mg cholesterol
- 1,200 mg sodium
## DAY 2

### Breakfast
1 cup shredded-wheat cereal; top with 1 cup blueberries, 2 Tbsp slivered almonds, 1 cup nonfat milk

### Lunch
1 whole-wheat pita filled with ½ cup sliced cucumber, ½ cup shredded carrots, 3 oz. tuna salad (made with canned tuna in water mixed with 2 Tbsp light mayonnaise)
1 cup nonfat milk

### Dinner
1 cup whole-wheat couscous; mix with 1 Tbsp pine nuts
1½ cups steamed green beans and pearl onions
3½ oz. chicken breast; brush with 1 tsp olive oil, then top with lemon slices and fresh herbs before grilling
1 apple

### Snack
Quesadilla made with 2 corn tortillas and ¼ cup shredded reduced-fat cheese, melted
1 orange

### Nutritional Information
- 1,730 calories
- 9 g saturated fat, 5% of total calories
- 0 trans fat
- 150 mg cholesterol
- 1,350 mg sodium

## DAY 3

### Breakfast
2 slices whole-wheat toast spread with 2 tsp unsalted peanut butter, 2 tsp all-fruit jam
½ grapefruit
1 cup nonfat milk

### Lunch
1 cup whole-wheat spaghetti; top with ½ cup low-sodium pasta sauce made with additional
2 oz. ground turkey (browned)
½ cup broccoli, sautéed in 1 tsp olive oil
Cappuccino made with 1 cup nonfat milk

### Dinner
1 cup brown rice
1½ cup mixed Asian vegetables, stir-fried with ½ cup tofu cubes in 1 tsp peanut oil, ½ tsp sesame oil
½ cup pineapple chunks, canned in juice

### Snack
3 graham-cracker squares 1 banana
1 Tbsp unsalted cashews 1 cup nonfat milk

### Nutritional Information
- 1,850 calories
- 10 g saturated fat, 5% of total calories
- 0 trans fat
- 85 mg cholesterol
- 1,250 mg sodium
## DAY 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>1 2-oz. whole-wheat tortilla; top with 1 oz. fresh mozzarella cheese, 1 diced tomato, ¼ cup diced avocado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td>2 slices whole-wheat bread with 3 oz. roast turkey breast, lettuce, tomato, 1 Tbsp light mayonnaise, 1 cup carrot sticks, ½ cup plain light or nonfat yogurt with 1 Tbsp walnuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td>Pasta-bean salad with 1 cup whole-wheat macaroni; 3 cups lettuce and mixed raw vegetables; ½ cup each salt-free canned chickpeas, kidney beans, and cannellini beans; 2 tsp olive oil, vinegar and fresh herbs to taste, 1 cup cantaloupe cubes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td>Mix 3 cups air-popped popcorn with 3 Tbsp raisins and 3 Tbsp unsalted peanuts, 1 cup nonfat milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nutritional Information**

- **Calories:** 1,780
- **Saturated Fat:** 10 g (5% of total calories)
- **Trans Fat:** 0
- **Cholesterol:** 105 mg
- **Sodium:** 1,460 mg

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## DAY 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>1 cup oat-ring cereal; top with 1 cup fresh or frozen peaches (sliced), 2 Tbsp chopped walnuts, 1 cup nonfat milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td>1 whole-wheat pita filled with ½ cup grilled red pepper, ½ cup diced tomato, ½ cup salt-free canned chickpeas, 2 Tbsp tahini (sesame sauce) Cappuccino made with 1 cup nonfat milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td>1 cup quinoa; mix with 1 Tbsp pine nuts, 1 medium baked sweet potato, ½ cup steamed green beans, 3½ oz. baked trout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td>3 graham-cracker squares, ½ cup plain light or nonfat yogurt with 1 sliced medium banana, 1 Tbsp unsalted peanuts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nutritional Information**

- **Calories:** 1,840
- **Saturated Fat:** 7 g (3% of total calories)
- **Trans Fat:** 0
- **Cholesterol:** 80 mg
- **Sodium:** 1,060 mg
## Day 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>¼ cup plain or nonfat yogurt, ½ cup low-fat granola, 1 cup blueberries, 2 Tbsp slivered almonds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>2 slices whole-wheat bread with 2 oz. roast turkey breast, ½ oz. sliced fresh mozzarella cheese, 3 Tbsp guacamole, lettuce and tomato, 1 cup carrot and celery sticks, 1 cup nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>1 cup whole-wheat pasta; top with 1½ cups broccoli, cauliflower, and zucchini sautéed in 2 tsp olive oil, 3½ oz. lean ground beef (browned), ½ cup cantaloupe cubes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>1 oz. whole-wheat pretzels; 2 Tbsp unsalted peanut butter, 1 apple, 1 cup nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Nutritional Information
- 1,770 calories
- 13 g saturated fat, 7% of total calories
- 0 trans fat
- 150 mg cholesterol
- 1,150 mg sodium

## Day 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>2 slices whole-wheat toast, 1 egg scrambled in a non-stick pan, 1 diced tomato, 1 orange, 1 cup nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>1 cup whole-wheat macaroni; top with ½ cup chopped red pepper, ½ cup broccoli florets, 2 oz. grilled chicken breast, 2 tsp olive oil, vinegar to taste, ¼ cup plain light or nonfat yogurt</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>1 cup brown rice, 1 cup cooked carrots, 3½ oz. roast pork loin; top with 2 Tbsp mango salsa, ½ grapefruit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>3 cups air-popped popcorn, 2 Tbsp unsalted peanuts, 1 cup grapes, Cappuccino made with 1 cup nonfat milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Nutritional Information
- 1,740 calories
- 8 g saturated fat, 4% of total calories
- 0 trans fat
- 345 mg cholesterol
- 1,130 mg sodium