

# Stay

Health Fitness Wellness Mind Body Soul

# Healthy Weekly

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**Breakfast** is often called the most important meal of the day, and for good reason. A healthy breakfast can provide you with the energy, nutrients and hydration you need to start your day right. But what are some of the best healthy breakfast foods to choose from? Here are five suggestions that are easy to prepare, delicious and nutritious.

- **Oatmeal:** Oatmeal is a whole-grain cereal that is rich in fiber, protein and antioxidants. It can help lower your cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar levels, as well as keep you feeling full for longer. You can top your oatmeal with fresh fruits, nuts, seeds or yogurt for extra flavor and nutrition.

- **Eggs:** Eggs are a great source of high-quality protein, healthy

- **Greek yogurt:** Greek yogurt is a creamy and tangy dairy product that is high in protein, calcium and probiotics. It can help improve your digestion, bone health and metabolism. You can eat Greek yogurt plain or with some granola, berries, honey or nuts for a satisfying and sweet breakfast.

- **Smoothies:** Smoothies are a quick and easy way to get a lot of fruits and vegetables in one glass. They are packed with vita-



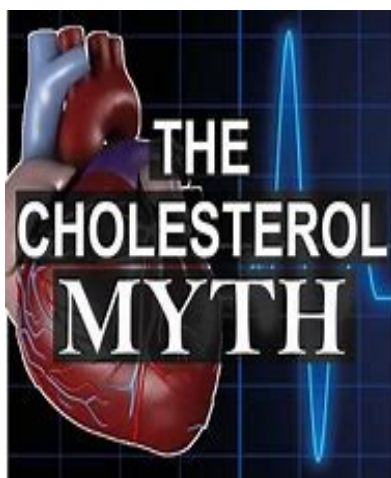
fats and essential vitamins and minerals. They can help you build muscle, support your brain function and boost your immune system. You can enjoy eggs in many ways, such as scrambled, boiled, poached or omelet. You can also add some vegetables, cheese or ham for more variety.

mins, antioxidants and fiber that can help you detoxify, hydrate and energize your body. You can blend your favorite fruits and veggies with some milk, yogurt, juice or water for a refreshing and filling drink.

- **Avocado toast:** Avocado toast is a trendy and tasty breakfast option that is also very healthy. Avocado is a superfood that contains healthy fats, fiber, potassium and vitamin E. It can help lower your inflammation, improve your skin and hair quality and protect your heart health. You can spread some mashed avocado on a slice of whole-wheat bread and sprinkle some salt, pepper, lemon juice or red pepper flakes for a simple and savory breakfast. *(Content by Sara Weeks Nutritionists)*



**Cholesterol** is a waxy substance that is essential for many functions in the body, such as making hormones, vitamin D, and bile acids. However, too much cholesterol in the blood can increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases, such as heart attack and stroke. There are many myths and misconceptions about cholesterol that can confuse people and affect their health choices. Here are some common ones and the facts behind them.



**Myth:** All cholesterol is bad for you.

**Fact:** Cholesterol is not inherently bad; it is only harmful when it accumulates in excess in the blood vessels. Cholesterol travels in the blood attached to proteins called lipoproteins. There are two main types of lipoproteins: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL). LDL is sometimes called "bad" cholesterol because it can deposit cholesterol in the walls of the arteries, forming plaques that narrow and harden them. HDL is sometimes called "good" cholesterol because it can remove cholesterol from the plaques and carry it back to the liver for elimination. Therefore, having high levels of HDL and low levels of LDL can protect against cardiovascular diseases.

**Myth:** I would be able to feel it if I had high cholesterol.

**Fact:** High cholesterol does not cause any symptoms until it leads to complications, such as angina, heart attack, or stroke. That is why it is important to get your cholesterol levels checked regularly by your doctor, especially if you have risk factors such as family history, smoking, diabetes, obesity, or high blood pres-

sure. The CDC recommends getting your cholesterol checked at least every five years for adults aged 20 years or older.

**Myth:** Eating foods with a lot of cholesterol will make my cholesterol levels go up.

**Fact:** The amount of cholesterol you eat from food has a relatively small effect on your blood cholesterol levels compared to the amount of saturated and trans fats you consume. Saturated fats are found mostly in animal products, such as meat, butter, cheese, and eggs. Trans fats are found mostly in processed foods, such as pastries, cakes, cookies, and margarines. These fats can raise your LDL levels and lower your HDL levels, increasing your risk of cardiovascular diseases. The American Heart Association recommends limiting your intake of saturated fats to less than 6% of your total calories per day and avoiding trans fats as much as possible.

**Myth:** I can't do anything to change my cholesterol levels.

**Fact:** You can lower your cholesterol levels and improve your heart health by making some lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthy diet that is rich in fiber, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, fish, and lean poultry; exercising regularly for at least 150 minutes per week; quitting smoking; losing weight if you are overweight or obese; and managing stress. In some cases, your doctor may also prescribe medications to lower your cholesterol levels, such as statins, bile acid sequestrants, niacin, fibrates, or ezetimibe. These drugs work by different mechanisms to reduce the amount of cholesterol produced by the liver or absorbed by the intestines.

Cholesterol is a complex topic that requires accurate information and guidance from health professionals. By learning the facts and myths about cholesterol, you can make informed decisions about your diet, lifestyle, and treatment options to keep your heart healthy and prevent cardiovascular diseases. *(Content by Brian Thompson M.D.)*





**Cane sugar and coconut sugar** are two types of natural sweeteners that are often used in baking, cooking and beverages. But are they different when it comes to your health? Here are some facts to consider.

**Cane sugar** is extracted from the juice of sugarcane, a tropical grass that grows in many parts of the world. It is refined to remove impurities and produce different grades of sugar, such as white, brown and raw. Cane sugar contains about 99% sucrose, which is a simple carbohydrate that provides 4 calories per gram.

**Coconut sugar** is made from the sap of coconut palm flowers, which are cut and boiled to evaporate the water and form crystals. Coconut sugar has a caramel-like flavor and a brown color. It contains about 70% sucrose, along with some glucose and fructose. It also has trace amounts of minerals, such as potassium, magnesium and iron. Coconut sugar provides about 3.6 calories per gram.

Both cane sugar and coconut sugar have a similar glycemic index (GI), which measures how quickly a food raises blood sugar levels. The GI of cane sugar is around 60, while the GI of coconut sugar is around 54. This means that both sugars can cause spikes and dips in blood sugar, especially for people with diabetes or insulin resistance.

Both cane sugar and coconut sugar are considered added sugars, which means they are not naturally present in foods and beverages. The American Heart Association recommends limiting added sugars to no more than 6 teaspoons (25 grams) per day for women and 9 teaspoons (37 grams) per day for men. Consuming too much added sugar can increase the risk of obesity, heart disease, tooth decay and other health problems.

**The bottom line** is that cane sugar and coconut sugar are not significantly different when it comes to your health. They both provide calories and carbohydrates, but not much else. They both have a moderate impact on blood sugar levels, but can still cause problems if consumed in excess. The best way to enjoy them is to use them sparingly and choose foods and beverages that are naturally sweet or have no added sugars.

*(Content Provided by Kim Richards –Nutritionists/Dietitian)*

### Going Vegan - Is it really worth it?

Veganism is a lifestyle that excludes all animal products, such as meat, dairy, eggs, honey, and leather. Some people choose to go vegan for ethical reasons, such as animal welfare and environmental protection. Others may do it for health benefits, such as lower cholesterol, blood pressure, and risk of chronic diseases. But is going vegan really worth it?



There is no definitive answer to this question, as different people may have different goals, preferences, and values. However, some general pros and cons of veganism can be considered.

#### Pros:

- Veganism can help reduce animal suffering and exploitation, as well as greenhouse gas emissions and land use associated with animal agriculture.
- Veganism can provide adequate nutrition if planned carefully and supplemented with vitamin B12 and other nutrients that may be lacking in plant-based diets.
- Veganism can offer a variety of delicious and diverse foods, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu, tempeh, seitan, plant milks, and vegan alternatives to cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and more.

#### Cons:

- Veganism can be challenging to follow in some social situations, such as eating out, traveling, or attending family gather-

ings. Some vegans may face criticism or ridicule from others who do not understand or respect their choices.

- Veganism can be expensive or inaccessible in some areas where vegan products are not widely available or affordable. Some vegans may need to shop online or at specialty stores to find what they need.

- Veganism can be restrictive or boring for some people who miss their favorite animal products or crave more variety. Some vegans may experience cravings or temptations to cheat on their diet.

Ultimately, going vegan is a personal decision that depends on one's own reasons, motivations, and circumstances. It is not a one-size-fits-all solution for everyone. However, for those who are interested in trying it out, there are many resources and support groups available online and offline to help them along the way. (Content by Jaye Kenzie-SH Research Team)

**How To Reboot Your Fitness Routine** If you feel stuck in a rut with your fitness routine, it might be time to reboot it. Here are five ways to refresh your workouts and get better results.

**1. Set a new goal.** Having a clear and specific goal can motivate you to work harder and track your progress. Whether you want to run a 10K, lose 10 pounds, or do 10 pull-ups, make sure your goal is realistic, measurable, and achievable.

**2. Try a new activity.** Doing the same exercises over and over can get boring and lead to plateaus. Experiment with different types of workouts, such as yoga, cycling, boxing, or dancing. You might discover a new passion or challenge yourself in new ways.

**3. Change your schedule.** If you always work out at the same time of day, you might benefit from switching it up. For example, if you usually exercise in the evening, try doing it in the morning. You might feel more energized, burn more calories, or avoid distractions.

**4. Find a buddy.** Working out with a friend, partner, or family member can make your fitness routine more fun and social. You



can also support each other, hold each other accountable, and compete with each other. Just make sure you choose someone who has similar goals and fitness levels as you.

**5. Reward yourself.** Rebooting your fitness routine can be hard work, so don't forget to treat yourself once in a while. Celebrate your achievements with something that makes you happy, such as a massage, a new outfit, or a movie night. Just avoid rewards that undermine your goals, such as junk food or alcohol. (Content by Jason Bell- Fitness Trainer)



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Email: [info@stayhealthyweekly.org](mailto:info@stayhealthyweekly.org)

Office: 702 808 9485

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