

by Marissa Lippert, RD



the heart-healthy kitchen makeover

WD reader Maria Rosenthal has high cholesterol and a family history of heart disease. We helped her take control—starting with what's in her pantry

WHEN IT COMES TO LOWERING YOUR RISK of heart disease, what you eat is a big factor. It's essential to watch fat and calories to maintain a healthy weight, and focus your diet on foods with less sodium (to keep blood pressure in check) and lots of fiber (they've been proven to help lower cholesterol). So when Brooklyn, New York, resident Maria Rosenthal found out she had high cholesterol, she came to us for help. "My dad had a stroke and both my brother and sister have high cholesterol, so I know I really have to pay attention to what I eat to stay healthy," says the 55-year-old mother of two. Stocking the kitchen wisely is crucial to making good choices, so we raided Maria's fridge and rummaged through her cabinets to make simple swaps and give her heart-healthy tips that fit into her day-to-day life. ▶

eat
healthy
america

TRY IT TODAY

Instead of using butter and salt to flavor veggies, cook them in a little olive oil with garlic, then add fresh herbs like parsley, rosemary and thyme.

pantry raid.....

First we made some easy substitutions to get Maria more fiber. We switched snacks like pretzels for whole-grain crackers and added whole grains like Italian faro, brown rice and whole-wheat pasta. To help Maria ditch her bagel breakfasts, we picked up whole-wheat pancake mix and steel-cut oatmeal (less processed than instant). We also stocked foods high in omega-3s—canned salmon, walnuts, natural peanut butter and olive oil—to fight inflammation. Then we traded in sweets like marshmallows for antioxidant-rich dark chocolate (70% or more cocoa).



Maria's challenges restocking her fridge...

"I'm not used to cooking for one person." Both of her daughters are grown up and out of the house, but Maria's still making family-size meals. "I buy a lot of cheese and vegetables, and I feel like I should try to cook—and eat—as much as I can before everything goes bad," she says. Maria also eats a lot of cold cuts and pasta, since those are easy to make for one person. Unfortunately, cold cuts tend to be high in sodium and saturated fat.

Get-healthy advice Maria needs to downsize her meals (and her shopping list). She wanted some quick, healthy one-serving dinner ideas, so we suggested grilled chicken breast with a small portion of pasta and veggie tomato sauce on the side, grilled salmon with sautéed spinach, or white bean-and-kale soup with a slice of multigrain bread.

"I go overboard when I cook for groups." Food is very important to Maria's Italian family, and she loves cooking for them and her friends. But lengthy group meals often prompt her to overeat.

Get-healthy advice When dining family style, Maria should fill her plate before she starts eating rather than nibbling along the way. Visualizing a balanced plate can help: Fill

We filled Maria's refrigerator with antioxidant- and fiber-rich foods that help prevent the buildup of LDL (the "bad" cholesterol): dark leafy greens, sweet potatoes, berries, red grapes, broccoli and amazing canned tomatoes that Maria jars herself. We even made room for small, healthy indulgences, like red wine (she can have a glass a few times a week). As for one of Maria's favorite foods—cheese—we chose goat cheese. It's delicious, creamy, and lower in fat and calories than other soft cheeses. Harder cheeses, like Parmesan, are also good choices since they can be grated (so you eat less) and add big flavor to dishes without too much fat and calories.

half with fruits and veggies, one-quarter with lean protein (chicken, fish) and one-quarter with healthy carbs (brown rice, sweet potato).

"I snack on junk food." When Maria's daughters visit, they buy treats like chips and ice cream.

Get-healthy advice Encourage the whole family to eat healthy so no one's bringing the "bad" stuff into the house! wd

eat
healthy
america

TRY IT THIS MONTH

Eat one heart-healthy snack every day. Good choices: veggies dipped in 2–3 Tbsp hummus, whole-grain crackers with 1 Tbsp almond butter, or a handful of nuts.

Eat Healthy America is a *Woman's Day* yearlong initiative designed to make good nutrition easy. To learn more, check out womensday.com/eathealthy

The Eat Healthy America Panel: Karen Ansel, RD, media representative for the New York State Dietetic Association; Louis J. Aronne, MD, director of the Comprehensive Weight Control Program at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center; Marissa Lippert, RD, founder of Nourish, a personal nutrition counseling service

Here's a taste of a day on *The Special K Challenge.*"

MEAL 1: Red Berries Cereal



SNACK 1: Raspberry Bliss® Bar



MEAL 2: Salad with Grilled Chicken



SNACK 2: Mixed Berry Protein Water



MEAL 3: Red Berries Waffles



Kick-start your plan at specialk.com today.

