



# HEALTHY NUTRITION



On the occasion of my Stroke, the EMT said to my wife, as they wheeled me out of my home . . .

**“ His blood pressure is off the chart ! ”**

I know now that my diet, combined with other contributors to high blood pressure, was a major cause of my Stroke. To put it bluntly my food choices and alcohol consumption . . .

**were out of control.**



**Alcohol**



**Salt**



**Animal Fats**



**Sugar**

In this Quick Guide we will share many of our approaches toward planning and preparing for a healthy balanced nutrition. Together, they have kept my blood pressure, weight, and energies controlled and contributing daily to the success of my Stroke Recovery.

## Taking Stock Of Food and Drink

I took stock of my pre-stroke eating habits during my hospital stay. It was made clear from the beginning that alcohol, salt, animal fat, and sugar, however it was added to my diet, was a concern for anyone planning and preparing the nutrition for a Stroke Survivor. My Caregivers and I made better, safer nutrition a priority when I returned home

We added new knowledge and appreciation for the health benefits of:



**Water**



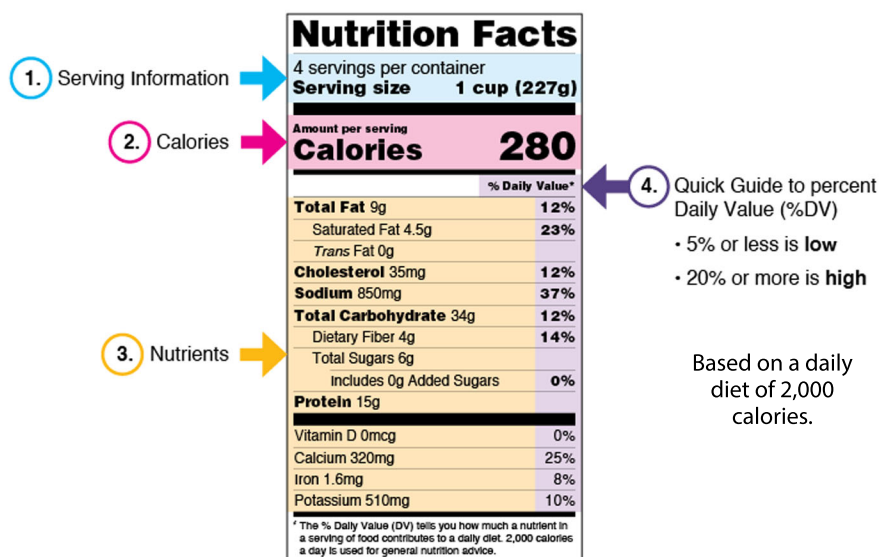
**Fruits and Vegetables**



**Moderation**

## Why Are Food Labels So Valuable

After we felt we knew the basics of healthy nutrition, we then had to apply what we had learned. Turns out there is a great tool available on nearly every packaged food. The FDA requires all food manufacturers to list a universal set of **NUTRITION FACTS** on, or near the food's label. The nutritional road map is divided into four sections. **SERVINGS**, **CALORIES**, **NUTRIENTS**, and **% OF DAILY VALUE**



**The FDA Has Designed A Road Map To Help Judge Most Packaged Food.**

This Food Label is for a packaged Lasagna.

**Note the 37% DV for Sodium (Salt).**

If you had two servings that would be 3/4 of your daily salt allowance in just one meal !

### SERVING

This sample label notes the size of the serving being evaluated and how many servings are in that food's package. In this example, the package contains 4 one cup servings.

### CALORIES

This food is calculated to have a total of 280 calories per serving.

### NUTRIENTS

This section of the label breaks out the nutritional information it wants the food manufacturer to precisely communicate to the consumer. Here is what we look for in their order of importance to the diet we have established in our household.

**Sodium** - 850mg That's a lot of salt ! That means if we eat one cup of this food - we are ingesting roughly 40% of our daily allowance for salt ! Yikes

**Total Fats** - 9g Good news, 0% Trans Fat in this package. Bad news, the 4.5 grams of SATURATED FAT in a serving represents roughly 23% of our daily calorie allowance.

**Cholesterol** - 35mg At 35mg and 12% of our daily allowances, this is not that bad.

**Added Sugars** - 0mg This manufacturer's recipe required zero grams of ADDED SUGAR. Perfect !

**Protein** - 15g Only about a quarter of the recommended intake of protein per day.

Bottom line, we would have passed on this Lasagna. Instead we would have looked for another brand with less salt, or more likely, make our own from scratch absolutely controlling the salt measures !

*See the Recovery Kitchen Recipe for NO SALT Home Made Lasagna, with meat sauce from scratch.*

# HYDRATION

## Water. Water. Water !

It's no accident that nearly every hospital team member visiting a patient will peak into the patient's water carafe. And, if it's not full they, or someone close by, will top it off; or gently scold you for not drinking more water ! Hydration is almost a religion in the health care community. This includes my personal trainer at the gym. Sarah begins and ends every fitness session with the admonition to **"drink lots of water !! "**



According to H.H. Mitchell, in the Journal of Biological Chemistry, the human adult body is made up of close to 60% water. Each of these parts of in our body are comprised of their percentages of water:

<b>BRAIN / HEART</b>	73%
<b>LUNGS</b>	83%
<b>SKIN</b>	64%
<b>MUSCLES</b>	79%
<b>BONES</b>	31%

That mean the adult brain is, by weight, 73% water. Therefore, our brain must have an adequate supply of water to keep our blood fluids flowing at a rate that will effectively support tackling the hundreds of tasks it faces each and every day.

Water helps us to distribute what is needed throughout our bodies every day. All day. After delivering oxygen and nutrients to all our cells, on it's return trip, water helps us with the daily elimination of toxins and the wastes our bodies collect or produce. Without H<sub>2</sub>O our blood doesn't flow, our organ and bone cells shrink and we are greatly reduced in our ability to fight off those things that would enter our bodies to do us harm. In addition, water helps our bodies to regulate body temperature, keep eyes, nose and throat moist and lubricate joints. And, maybe most important - enough water each day eases the burden on our kidneys and livers to flush out toxic waste substances.



## NOT ENOUGH WATER !

It's hard to give our bodies too much water. But, it is all too easy to deprive our bodies of the ample water we need every day. There can be repercussions, some serious. If we ignore our daily need for hydration we increase the risks for:

**JOINT DYSFUNCTION**

**CONSTIPATION**

**POOR CIRCULATION**

**LOWERED ENERGY**

**LOWERED IMMUNITY**

**LIVER and KIDNEY FAILURE**

Yes, there is water in coffee, juice, sodas, and sports drinks. But, each of these can add caffeine, oils, sugars, and other extras I don't need in my DRINKING WATER. And I finally realized, and admitted to myself, I was neglecting a major part of my nutrition. But, how to make the adjustment and increase the amount of JUST PLAIN WATER for daily nutrition and overall body health ?

First, I had to stop confusing being thirsty with the need to drink significant amounts of water during my waking hours. Then I had to devise ways to help me remember to drink significant amounts of water throughout the day.

So, I started with my meds. I take meds four times a day. If, rather than taking a few sips with my pills - I drink a cup of water. That's 16 oz right there. Then I keep a 8 oz cup of water in my bathroom. Each time I use the bathroom for any purpose, I drink a cup of water. On average I drink 8 cups of water each day after using the bathroom. That's 64 oz of water. Then I make it a point to drink a cup of water each time I visit the kitchen for a meal or snack. Usually this results in an average of 6 more cups of water, or 48oz. So, just by incorporating water with my daily activities I can assure myself of one full gallon (128 oz) of fresh, pure water every day !

Does drinking all that plain water make a difference ? I know I regularly benefit from the following:

1. Less constipation
2. More immunity
3. Better circulation
4. Less stiffness
5. Better digestion
6. Improved sleep.

So yeah. I get it. More Water !

# SALT AWARENESS

So why the concern about something as innocent as salt?

**Thinking that I was protected by my out-of-date Blood Pressure prescriptions I had become a salt junkie. I was eating salty breakfast food, salty snakes, too salty a lunch.**

**Plus, having two, sometimes three martinis a night not so much for the buzz, but for the salty satisfaction given to me by the several JUMBO pickled olives and cocktail onions in each drink.**

**Now add to that, 5 or 6 spicy tacos for dinner, and a bag of chips before bed. It was like putting bullets in a gun.**

Salt can have a direct effect on blood pressure. During hospitalization, much of what was done for me was bringing my out-of-control blood pressure under control so that I might not have a stroke on their watch. So, right away **salt was a no no**. This restriction of course followed me home as there remained a real concern that I could have another Stroke.

I was blessed with above average hospital food. But it was apparent from the start that something was missing. SALT ! It was bearable. But, the real challenge would come when I returned home. Like the hospital Team, my wife and sisters didn't want me to have another Stroke on their watch either. So, they hit the refrigerator first, and then the pantry hunting for salt lurking in our recipes, prepared foods, and food additives. And we were truly surprised at what we found . . . especially in our favorite food choices.

But before we bare the sins of our kitchen, lets put SALT into perspective. First, salt is an important mineral needed in our bodily functions. But, for eons of human development we subsisted on a very small measure of salt added to our diet. Salt was for thousands of years a precious commodity. Used to heighten our pallet's appreciation for the taste of the foods we consumed. More valuable was salt's ability to preserve food stuffs for extended periods. So rare, and hard to get, that it was a highly valued commodity. Hence, " He's not worth his weight in salt !" Bottom line, our bodies need sodium in the form of salt to keep our bodies functioning and in good health. **A classic " less is more ".**



In our quest to purge salt from my diet, we needed some benchmark for salt tolerance. Our research found the recommended salt intake was at around 2,000 mg per day. We set my daily salt limit at

**1,850 mg. per day**

That's less than one level teaspoon ( 2,325 mg ) of table salt consumption per day !

## TAMING MY SALT HABIT

I confess to having a salt habit before my Stroke. Yes I was a salt junkie. And, that was much of what got me into trouble. The average American indulges in roughly 3,400 mg of salt per day. I exceed this substantially - every day - for far too long. But, why should my habit be detrimental !

I have since found out that our bodies balance the amount of sodium (salt) as our kidneys perform their regular function. If our body does not get enough sodium, the kidneys hold on to what they have. If the sodium level gets high some of the excess is released in our urine.

**But, if the kidneys can't eliminate enough sodium, it builds up in our blood. And, here is the dilemma for Stroke Survivors - Because sodium attracts and holds water, our blood volume increases. This increase makes our heart pump harder, and this increases the pressure within our arteries.**

Everyone has differing tolerances for sodium capacities. Some of us are more sensitive to the effects of sodium. So, if I retain sodium more easily I will naturally retain more fluid and increase my blood pressure.

Now they don't give me medications to reduce salt in my system, so I have to be my own watch dog. But, like monitoring sugar, the course is rocky and strewn with pitfalls. Also like sugar, salt is hidden in many innocent appearing places.

## FOODS NATURALLY CONTAINING SALT

Foods that naturally include salt in their make up include, dairy products, vegetables, meat, dairy products, and shellfish ( no surprise there ). There is not a lot of salt in these foods. But, when you do eat them you are adding a small measure of sodium to your daily intake. For example:

**1 cup (237 milliliters) of low-fat milk contains roughly 100 mg of sodium**

That cup of milk adds to the overall sodium consumed in a day.

## FOODS WITH ADDED SALT

Ironically, I've never used salt at the dining table. My out of control sodium intake came from processed or prepared foods; including, pizza, cold cuts and bacon, cheese, soups, fast food, and prepared dinners, such as pasta, meat and egg dishes. Even bread. My worst prepared food habit had to have been Rotisserie Chicken. Many recipes call for salt, We had to work our way out of that dilemma. Even the condiments we all loved so much carry a stowaway of salts never considered before my Stroke.

**One tablespoon (15 milliliters) of soy sauce, includes nearly 1,000 mg of sodium.**

So now it was up to me, my wife and sisters to do our due diligence in our existing kitchen and reform it in the spirit of our new Recovery Kitchen.

visit us at [WWW.KIKKOMANUSA.COM](http://WWW.KIKKOMANUSA.COM)

Nutrition Facts		Amount/serving	% DV
About 30 servings		<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
<b>Serv. Size</b>		<b>Sodium</b> 960mg	<b>42%</b>
<b>1 Tbsp (15mL)</b>		<b>Total Carb.</b> 1g	<b>0%</b>
<b>Calories</b> 10		<b>Protein</b> 2g	
per serving			
INGREDIENTS: WATER, SOYBEANS, WHEAT, SALT, BREWED BY KIKKOMAN FOODS, INC., WALWORTH, WI 53184 USA			

# I HAD TO CUT WAY BACK



My hospital stay proved that I could get through the day without my salt fix. But, when I got home, me and my Caregivers had to discover where we could continue this trend of reducing as much salt as possible.

We started in our cupboards and the refrigerator. We removed many favorites including the obvious

**Ketchup   BBQ Sauces   Pickles   Worcestershire Sauce   Seasoned Vinegars**

Which of these players we would pull from our shelves was relatively easy as the high salt contents just leaped off the labels.



## RELYING LESS ON RESTAURANTS

Eating out and take out proved a real challenge to curbing sodium intake. We love both. Unfortunately, it is extremely hard to manage salt from this side of the plate ! Fast foods are notorious for especially salty foods. And, generally speaking, it is the rare restaurant that is willing to listen to and respond to your concerns about salt in their menus. Fast foods were the easiest to tackle. The salty selections are all to often easy to spot. Plus, many large chain fast food restaurants publish nutrition information for most, if not all, of their dine in / take out menu.

Traditional restaurants are more challenging. You will have to shop around until you find one that is responsive to your inquiries and requests. We were lucky. A local family owned full services restaurant BROOKFIELDS has been very helpful and supportive. We're comfortable going their for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

**RK Recipe: Turkey Chile**

- 1 lb. Ground Turkey
- 1 Onion - Diced
- 1 Pablano Chili - Diced
- 2 14 oz Cans Cannellini Beans ( No salt added )
- 1 4 oz Can Roasted Peppers - Diced
- 1 Yellow Onion - Diced

Brown turkey in Instant Pot. Add seasonings Saute 3 min.  
Add remaining ingredients. Set IP to SOUP for 5 min. NR



## AMENDING OUR RECIPES

Before my Stroke, salt was a natural component to nearly all my kitchen and BBQ recipes. But, now being more alert to the downsides of sodium we took another look at all my favorite casseroles, soups, stews, sauces, gravies, and dressings. Actually this was pretty easy to do. All we had to do was search the NET for common **LOW SALT** and **NO SALT** recipes. To counter this adjustment, we relied on fresh and dried herbs, bold ( and new to us ) spices. Plus a dash of citrus juice and zests to jazz up the recipes.

You can leave out the salt in many recipes, including casseroles, soups, stews and other main dishes that you cook. Look for cookbooks that focus on lowering risks of high blood pressure and heart disease.



# SALT - NOT SO INNOCENT



## To Much Salt Can Sneak Up On You FAST !

This is a fairly representative display of my typical day's eating prior to my Stroke. The recommended daily consumption of SALT is **between 2,300 mg and 2,500mg**, depending on who you ask. And these daily limits favor the healthy adults in our population.

**But, in my naive state of denial, this was my typical ONE DAY consumption of SALT !**

Milk ( Whole, Fresh )	8 oz	5 % DV	110 mg
Cereal ( Cheerios )	1 Cup	8 % DV	190 mg
V8 Juice	5.5 oz	19 % DV	44 mg
AM Snack - Toaster Strudel	2 oz	8 % DV	180 mg
Hot Dog ( Mustard & Relish )	1 Link/bun	50% DV	1,202 mg
Potato Chips ( Kettle )	8 oz bag	11% DV	210 mg
Dill Pickle Spear	4 oz spear	16% DV	244 mg

**Even Before My Afternoon Snack . . . I Was Already At 2,009mg of SALT !**

PM Snack - Cheetos	6.8 oz bag	11% DV	250 mg
Bloody Mary Cocktail	6 oz glass	60% DV	1,460 mg
Salad Dressing ( Olive Garden)	2 oz Serving	23% DV	540 mg
Rotisserie Chicken	3 oz White Meat	27% DV	460 mg
Mashed Potato ( Garlic Boxed )	4 oz Serving	26% DV	590 mg
Chicken Gravy ( Jar )	2 oz Serving	10% DV	240 mg
Green Beans (Del Monte Canned)	4 oz Serving	15% DV	340 mg
Evening Snack (Little Debbie Apple Pie)	4 oz Serving	18% DV	420 mg

## SALT EMERGENCY

**Total This Day 6,309mg**

**( Daily Allowable 2,400mg )**

Now, dial in that second hot dog at lunch  
or, second servings at dinner !

Still think salt can be innocent !?!

Every night I went to bed  
with a cardiovascular system

**SUPER CHARGED**

with life threatening amounts of  
**SALT !!**

## SALT SAVVY PANTRY

Cooking at home with recipes we create or modify is still the best way to control salt in my diet and those of my Caregiver(s). This is easily achieved through a hierarchy of choices

- Choose **FRESH FOODS** already low in salt
- Purchase **NO SALT**, or **LOW SALT** foods
- **GO EASY** on the condiments
- **CHECK LABELS** before you buy or use

Here is a list of the no/low salt staples we discovered and now stock in our Recovery Kitchen Pantry.

### UNPROCESSED SALT

Brand: AROMASONG DEAD SEA SALT

Flavor: Low Salt - 68% less sodium than table salt.

Size: 2.5 lbs. Around \$20 from Amazon.

*We sometimes use a pinch, or a fraction of a teaspoon to add a little sparkle to a full recipe.*



### CONDIMENTS / SEASONINGS

Brand: KETCHUP HEINZ NO SALT ADDED

Flavor: No salt added.

Size: 14 oz. Around \$10 from Amazon.

*A tasty substitute for common tomato ketchups*



Brand: McILHENNY TABASCO PEPPER SAUCE

Flavor: Red pepper and vinegar.

Size: 2 oz. Around \$1.50 almost anywhere.

*Quick and easy sub for salt at the table.*



Brand: TRADER JOE'S AIOLI MUSTARD SAUCE

Flavor: Aioli Garlic Mustard Sauce

Size: 9 oz. Around \$2.50 Trader Joe's

*At just 2%DV sodium, this is our go-to mustard for sandwiches and dressings.*



## SALT SAVVY PANTRY ( Continued )

More no/low salt staples we discovered and now stock in our Recovery Kitchen Pantry.

### TOMATO PRODUCTS

Brand: HUNTS

Flavor: No Salt Added Tomato PASTE

Size: 6 oz can Pak of 12 Around \$12 from Amazon.

*The perfect no salt base for soups and sauces.*



Brand: MUIR GLEN ORGANIC

Flavor: Diced FIRE ROASTED Tomatoes

Size: 14.5 oz. Around \$3 from Instacart

*Great for building soups, stews and sauces.*

*A little pricey, but oh so delicious !*



### CANNED BEANS

Brand: 365 WHOLE FOODS MARKET

Flavor: Black, Kidney and Cannelloni.

Size: 15 oz. Around \$1.00 Amazon/WFM

*One of the good carbs. Put them in soups or on salads for a protein boost.*



### PEANUT BUTTER

Brand: 365 WHOLE FOODS MARKET

Flavor: No Salt Organic Creamy Peanut Butter

Size: 16 oz. Around \$5.00 Amazon/WFM

*A great way to add protein to lunches and snacks.*



# FATS / OILS

We cannot arbitrarily eliminate all fats from our diet. But, we can manage them in the food choices we make every day. Fats, be they animal or plant are essential to a healthy diet. Fats are one of the fuels our bodies need regularly to function at peak proficiency. Fats are divided into these categories.

## SATURATED FATS



Meat and other animal products, such as butter, shortening, lard, cheese, and milk (except skim or nonfat) contain Saturated Fats. Eating too much saturated fat can raise blood cholesterol levels and increase the risk of Heart Disease and Stroke. Best look for alternatives, especially in the oils we use for cooking. Coconut oil is also high in saturated fat, but because its structure is different from saturated fats in animal products - Coconut oil has become popular due to its healthier benefits. Still, olive and avocado oils are even more heart-healthy. See the Stroke Angel Recovery Kitchen for how we track saturated fats in our Recovery Kitchen.



## TRANS FATS aka TRANS FATTY ACIDS

Trans Fats are created when vegetable oils are hydrogenated (meaning that hydrogen atoms are added to the fat molecule so they remain solid at room temperature). They are found in some stick margarines. A good many manufactured snack foods, commercial baked goods and commercially fried foods are processed with Trans Fats. These “fatty acids” can raise cholesterol and increase the risk of Heart Disease and Stroke. Food manufacturers must list trans fats on food labels; but, may also refer to them as “partially hydrogenated” oils on the ingredient list. We should note, many companies now make margarines (or vegetable oil spreads) without trans fats.

## UNSATURATED FATS



We find unsaturated fats in plant foods and fish. These are fats seen as benefiting HEART HEALTH. Unsaturated fats include:

- **Monounsaturated** Found in avocados and olive, peanut, and canola oils.
- **Polyunsaturated** Found in most all vegetable oils.
- **Omega-3 Fatty acids** A specific polyunsaturated in oily fish like tuna and salmon.



# DIETARY OILS

Like many fats, oils used in cooking and cold food recipes are at the top of the food pyramid. If properly selected for the correct application, dietary oils can help in the maintenance of body tissues and promote heart health. My two top choices serve well in both cooking ( hot ) and food flavoring (cold ) preparations. Each choice is made better by being minimally processed in their production.

## COOKING / BAKING

### 1. OLIVE OIL - Extra Virgin ( EVOO )

Minimally processed **Smoke Point 375 ° F**

High in monounsaturated fats and antioxidants, making this oil anti-inflammatory, heart healthy - my top goals for eating right ! Extra-virgin olive oil is best used in raw food preparations as it has a lower smoke point that ranges from 325-375°F. This is my favorite for flavor. I get the best I can afford !



### 2. AVOCADO OIL

Minimally processed **Smoke Point 500° F**

Considered a good source of vitamin E. Avocado oil also contains nutrients (carotenoids and oleic acid) that nourish the skin, promote eye health, and help balance blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.



### 3. GRASS FED GHEE

Minimally processed **Smoke Point 480° F**

Also referred to as *clarified butter*, I make ghee by melting butter and separating the milk solids from the fat in butter from grass fed cows. Ghee has a rich, nutty flavor, and is spreadable when cold. After this simple separation, the Ghee product promotes gut health and digestion-supportive nutrients that help fight inflammation. And ( ironically ), reduces body fat. Because the milk solids have been removed this fat may be more acceptable to those who suffer a Lactose intolerance.



## Our Cholesterol Campaign

After due consideration, I decided not to totally divorce myself from animal fats. Instead I chose to examine each category of fat I might encounter in my day and week. Like salt, fats be they from animal flesh or vegetation, are essential for the healthy functioning of our bodies.

First, I set about examining how fat and cholesterol had played a part in my Stroke Event. And, what part would they play in efforts to reduce my risk of another Stroke. We needed to know what cholesterol was, where it came from, and how to integrate them into a healthy recovery diet. This also meant that I had to understand the difference between HDL and LDL cholesterol.

## CVD - Our Wake Up Call

In the U.S. one person dies from **Cardio Vascular Disease - CVD** every 37 seconds. And, the ratio is increasing. The risk of developing CVD is increased by smoking, obesity, poor food choices, and inactivity.

## ASCVD

Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) is a type of cardiovascular disease caused by **high levels of bad cholesterol (LDL-C) in the blood**. This leads to the buildup of plaque on the walls of the arteries, which can contribute increased risk of heart attack or stroke over time.

## Nutrition's Jekyll and Hyde

Like Robert Louis Stevenson's character, Cholesterol has two distinct personalities. **One Bad. One Good.**

### Bad Cholesterol - LDL-C

The cholesterol called LDL-C collects in the walls of the blood vessels. it's often referred to as **Bad Cholesterol**. High levels of bad cholesterol will increase the risk of heart disease and stroke over time.



A diet filled with "fatty foods" . . .



Contributes to LDL build ups !

### Good Cholesterol - HDL-C

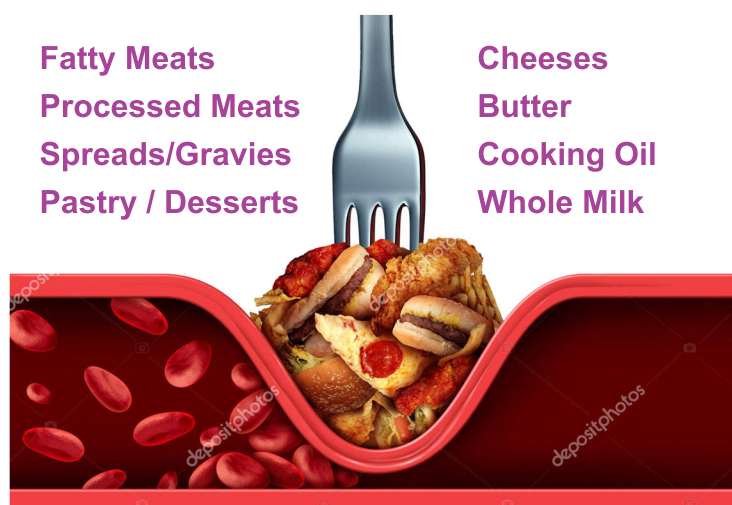
Conversely, HDL-C, the **Good Cholesterol**, carries the bad cholesterol away from the arteries and deposits them in the liver. This cleansing by the good cholesterol could help lower the risk of my having second stroke. And, improve overall Cardio Vascular Health at the same time.

## Managing Both Cholesterols

Also like salt, too much fat in our diet ( especially those saturated fats loaded with LDLs) can lead to obesity and degraded heart health. The threat to our hearts, arteries and blood vessels is cholesterol, more specifically the collection of LDLs in our system. Our first goal was to identify which foods are likely to be high in saturated fats and LDLs. These were to be eliminated from our menu, or at least drastically curbed at the kitchen counter. Next we sought to identify foods that were known to be high in monounsaturated fat and the Good HDLs. We tried to completely eliminate polyunsaturated food mainly because of their suspect trans fat components.

### Bad Cholesterol - LDL

The foods we identified as high in saturated fat and LDLs included:



### Good Cholesterol - HDL

The foods we identified as high in monounsaturated fat and HDLs included:

**Beans**  
**Salmon**  
**Avocado**  
**Nuts**



**Olive Avocado Oils**  
**Legumes**  
**Fibrous Fruits**  
**Flax**

In addition to their healthier HDLs, these foods are a way to deliver heart healthy vitamins, minerals and an array of nutrients to your body. But, because even these healthy foods can have interactions with medications or prescriptions, I reviewed them with my Primary Physician before stocking up.



## Too Much Sugar ??

Our research found that a little sugar was OK. But, we found a lot of evidence that too much of this simple carbohydrate could lead to weight gain, diabetes, and of course, tooth decay. Simple carbs are empty calorie foods. They are for the most part **ADDED SUGARS**, separate from the sugars naturally occurring in foods such as fruits, grains, and dairy products. This was a no brainer and dovetailed into our new RECOVERY KITCHEN DIET. Because we were eating a lot more fresh fruit, and whole grains, we were cutting out a lot of the white stuff !



## HIDDEN SUGARS

Carbohydrates are sugar molecules commonly referred to as “carbs”. Carbs join proteins and fats as the three main **MACRONUTRIENTS** in the foods we eat. Our bodies break down carbs into glucose, Carbs are divided into complex and simple forms. **Complex carbs** take longer to convert into glucose in our bodies. **Simple carbs** are converted more quickly.

### COMPLEX CARBS

**Legumes**  
**Whole Grains**  
**Fiber-rich fruits**  
**Fiber-rich vegetables**  
**Beans**

### SIMPLE CARBS

**Table Sugar**  
**Candy**  
**Sweet Drinks**  
**Juice Concentrates**  
**Bakery Treats**

Quick conversions, like a candy bar, usually give a rapid boost in energy; that also dissipate quickly. A sugar let-down. The conversion of complex carbs, like a bowl of old fashioned oatmeal, sweetened with fresh berries, builds energy slowly, but in a form that is sustainable for a longer period of time.

## The Carbohydrate Conundrum

Carbohydrates that are NOT CONVERTED to energy, are instead converted to FAT in the body.

This is the human body's way of planning for lean times. And here's the kicker - if the body has a ready supply of SIMPLE CARBS ( sugars ) - - it will use them before looking to the energy stored in body fat. So, if I have a constant supply of simple carbs, my body will convert the surplus and convert them to storage - BODY FAT !

## Our Carbohydrate Campaign

So, like other nutrients we have discovered in my recovery, sugars play a vital role in how are bodies attain, burn, . . . and store carbohydrates .



## OUR NEW CARB KNOWLEDGE

So what did we do with this new knowledge of carbohydrates ? First, like the salt shaker, we removed the sugar bowl from our coffee cart. Next, we began to examine nutrition labels for different foods, noting the “**added sugars**” in each serving size. This was even more eye opening than our search for sodium in our accustomed food favorites. Here’s a more blatant example of added sugars we found in a very “innocent” food stuff.



### Quaker Instant Oats Maple Brown Sugar

1 packet wt=43g  
12g or 24% DV  
Added sugar

### Old Fashion Oats Dry Bulk Food

43g serving  
0g or 0% DV  
Added Sugar

## PROVING MY POINT

Take a close look . . . the convenient oatmeal packet contains a **whopping 24%** of the recommended daily % of **added sugar**. I would have been 1/4 of the way to my daily sugar allotment and I’ve only had breakfast !

But, by choosing the plain Old Fashioned, minimally processed oats I will have NO ADDED SUGAR. It’s really that simple.

And what did I have to give up to attain this advantage? Purely convenience !

See my delicious, quick and easy recipes for Old Fashion Oats in my Stroke Angel Quick Guide titled [Recovery Kitchen - Recipes](#) !

# Sugar Substitutes



## LOW CALORIE SWEETENERS

The first place we addressed sugar in our diet was at the coffee machine. A lifetime of trying different artificial sweeteners had been lackluster at best. (Remember those hideous little saccharine tablets ?) Then we discovered the all natural sweetener made from the leaves of the **Stevia** plant. We like the Truvia® brand Stevia powders. Not as cheap as white refined sugar, but zero calories and dissolves quickly in our coffee. And **NO AFTERTASTE** ! My wife keeps a few packets in her purse for when we are out and about. We have been using NuNaturals stevia based simple syrup on our hot cereals and as a sugar substitute when baking. Also we avoid sugary soft drinks and beverage mixes as they only add unnecessarily to our daily added sugar intake.



### Truvia® Brand Stevia Powder

Our New Sugar Bowl  
About \$7 from Amazon



### Truvia® Brand Stevia Packets

Two For The Road  
About \$19 from Amazon



### NuNatural® Brand Stevia Simple Syrup

Great For Liquid Recipes  
About \$18 from Amazon



### Truvia® Brand Granulated

Perfect For Baking  
About \$9 from Amazon

## USING SUGAR SUBSTITUTES

Of course, my day begins with my decaffeinated “Cup Of Joe”. This regularly gets sweetened with 1/2 teaspoon of Truvia stevia powder.

My breakfast M-F is the Old Fashioned Oats we already reviewed. I put a drizzle of the NuNatural stevia syrup on them just before adding the water and accompanying fruits, nuts, unsweetened shredded coconut, and protein powder. So, for this breakfast, the only calories come from the fruits, nuts and I used to give the oats a flavor boost..

I use the stevia syrup as a no-sugar sweetener in my homemade salad dressings. And I find using the granulated Truvia really easy to use in my baking recipes.

**Hint:** My wife keeps some Truvia packets in her purse for when we are out and about.

## Include More Fiber

After water, we found the FIBER in unprocessed, grains, fresh fruits and vegetables to be an excellent way to avoid added sodium, preserve vitamins and minerals in eatable form, and of course add lots and lots of fiber to our diets. Our fruit bowl is always full for healthy snacks and recipes. Smoothies are a fun way to combine fruits and plant based milk substitutes. Add a protein power and you can have a complete meal. Dietary fiber can be divided into two categories:

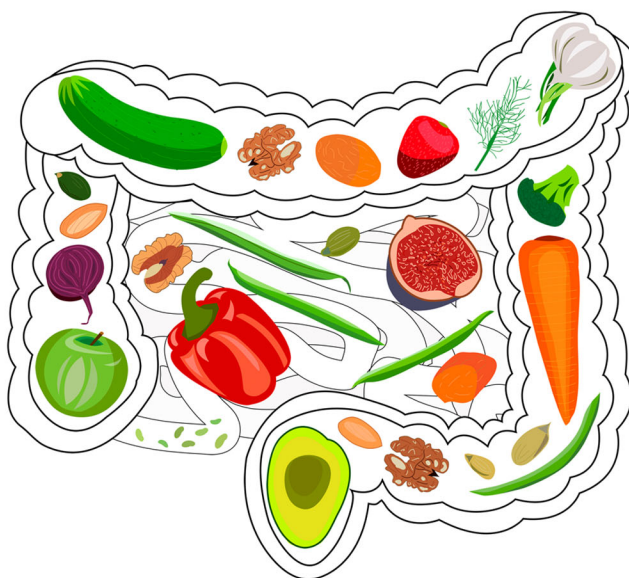
### INSOLUBLE FIBER (Brans)

Plant Fibers That DO NOT Dissolve In Water

### SOLUBLE FIBER (Beans)

Plant Fibers That DO Dissolve In Water

Before my Stroke I prided myself on the regularity of my bowel movements. They were as regular as clockwork and easy to pass. Since my Stroke I have been plagued with chronic constipation. It is thought to be promoted by the handful of pills I have taken daily since day one in the hospital; and continued at home these many months later. I will post more on this connection as I discover more about the issue. There is no doubt that fiber helps relieve constipation especially when accompanied with lots of clear water. These are among my favorite daily fiber foods.



## Fiber Promotes GI Health

We found that foods made of INSOLUBLE fiber add bulk to bowel stool and do not produce colon gas. Sources of insoluble fiber include:

**Whole Grain Foods    Wheat Bran    Vegetables w/skins    Nuts/Seeds    Fruits w/ skins    Brown / Wild Rice**

I try to share experiences, rather than give advice. However, if you are over 65 and have a protracted spell of constipation, you might consider a colonoscopy, especially, if like me, you had never had a visit to Dr. Proctor and Nurse Squint. I avoided this procedure thinking it was highly unpleasant. It's not. The prep - solution drinking and evacuation is painless. And, my out-patient procedure was painless - I was asleep the whole time. My post procedure lunch was one of the best in memory !

My colonoscopy revealed early signs of *diverticulitis*, meaning that it was more important than ever to eat a diet HIGH in fiber, LOW in animal fat.

My suggestion: your Doctor about your colon health.

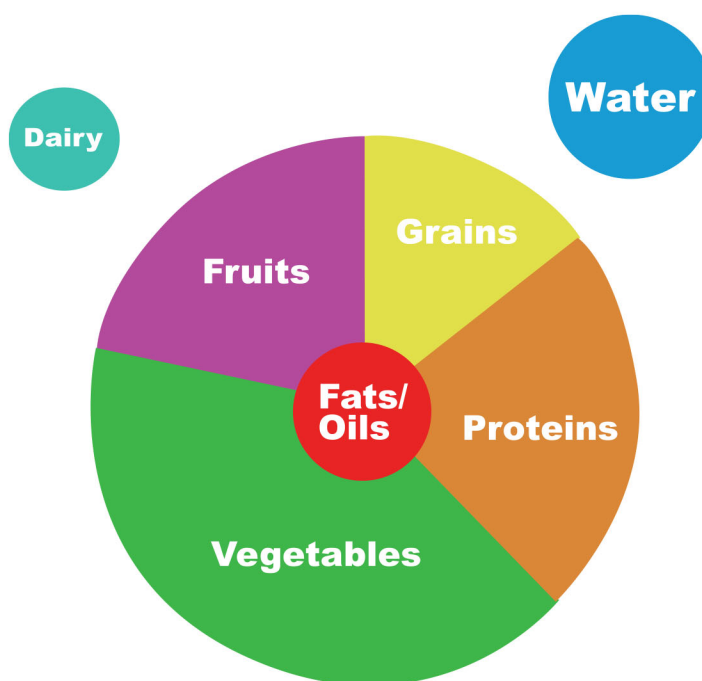
# Healthy Proportion



What to eat and what to avoid eating are certainly important. But, more important is paying strict attention to how much I eat of any food stuff in proportion to the others that I will consume.

For example, if I were to concentrate on nearly filling my plate with fatty meat products at every meal, I would be inviting unhealthy amounts of saturated animal fats into my daily diet. Conversely, if I were to eat a more responsible proportions of these fats and expand the proportions favoring unsaturated plant based fats, I would have already contributed greatly to my goal of reducing LDLs and raising HDLs.

I needed a model which reminded me of my goal to create a proportional balance in every meal I make for myself and my Caregivers. This is the model I designed for myself. It is posted in my Recovery Kitchen and reminds me to give considerable thought in advance of every meal I prepare.



## RK Meal Plan DAILY PROPORTIONS

