**Plant Based Heart Health Program – Evidence Sheet**

This program was created with the following key considerations:

**Low Saturated Fat**

Replacing [saturated fat](https://www.onlinecjc.ca/action/showPdf?pii=S0828-282X%2816%2930732-2) in the diet with healthy [plant-based fats](https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/CIRCRESAHA.118.313348) is shown to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. This program limits saturated fat to less than 15 grams per day, and the sources of this type of fat come from healthier foods like nuts, seeds, and almond butter.

**Healthy Fats**

This program contains [omega-3 fats](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6822654/) from walnuts, and monounsaturated fatty acids from [olive oil](https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/11/12/2941/htm), almonds, and avocado. [Almonds](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-nutrition/article/combined-effects-of-a-dietary-portfolio-of-plant-sterols-vegetable-protein-viscous-fibre-and-almonds-on-ldl-particle-size/B5A301F1BF50FB01621A25FBA21D1723) and almond butter are included daily in this plan as [research](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/1104262) shows that eating five servings of nuts a week is associated with a decrease in cholesterol levels and coronary heart disease events.

**Fiber**

Adequate dietary fiber intake is associated with [lower blood pressure](https://pubs.rsc.org/en/content/articlelanding/2016/fo/c5fo00950b/unauth#!divAbstract) and [reduced inflammation](https://academic.oup.com/advances/article/9/3/193/4996113). This program is rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and legumes to provide a daily total fiber amount of up to 55 grams. These foods also contain naturally occurring [plant sterols](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6163911/) which can help lower cholesterol. Soluble fiber found in foods like oats, chickpeas, bananas, berries, and Brussels sprouts are incorporated into the program and have been shown to [improve glycemic control](https://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/archive/42/5/755/1.abstract) and [lower cholesterol levels](https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/11/5/1155/htm).

**Low Sodium**

[Guidelines](https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000678) recommend restricting sodium to less than 2,000 milligrams per day to prevent or treat hypertension and reduce the risk of stroke and [cardiovascular disease](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10654-017-0354-8). This program meets the sodium limit with less than 1,800 milligrams per day.

**Soy Protein**

The [Portfolio Diet](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11883-004-0091-9) has shown that including [soy protein](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0026049503002609) daily reduces levels of bad cholesterol and improves good cholesterol levels. This program incorporates soy protein from foods like tofu and edamame for at least one meal per day. The other meals and snacks contain high fiber protein sources from black beans, chickpeas, and hummus.