



# The Crestwood Behavioral Health Heart Healthy Diet

Here at Crestwood, we serve what we describe as a heart healthy diet. This diet is appropriate for the vast majority of the people we serve, including those with diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.

The menus and recipes are developed by Margaret Clayton, the Director of Nutrition and Wellness, who has an M.S. in Nutrition Education, and they are reviewed and approved by Pamela Lambert, a Registered Dietitian and Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.

The Crestwood Heart Healthy Diet is low in saturated fat and sodium. Foods are prepared from scratch as often as possible, including salad dressings, ketchup, and granola. Fish is served twice a week, and red meat is limited to once a week. We also offer three vegetarian meals a week, as well as a vegetarian alternative meal every day to encourage those who want to eat a vegetarian diet. Lean proteins such as chicken and turkey are served often, as are beans and other plant-based proteins. The diet includes many sources of healthy fats such as plant oils, seeds, and nuts. Whole wheat breads and pasta products are used whenever possible, and low-fat dairy products such as fat-free milk and low-fat yogurt are served. Fresh fruit is available every day. We also avoid food additives such as high fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated oils, artificial sweeteners, and excessive preservatives.

The diet is appropriate for diabetics because we keep each meal within a certain range of carbohydrates, and we offer very few concentrated sweets. We do most of our baking with whole wheat flour and serve real sugar in small portions.

The diet is appropriate for those with heart disease because we limit saturated fat by serving red meat only once a week and serving low-fat dairy products. We also use very little added salt, and few processed or canned goods.

We appreciate receiving feedback from the people we serve and many of our Dietary Directors meet with the people that we serve regularly to listen to their requests and suggestions. We celebrate holidays and other events with special menu items, often those requested by the people that we serve. Barbeques are common in the warmer months, and monthly birthday parties are celebrated with ice cream and cake or other special desserts.

The Crestwood Heart Healthy Diet also includes meals from a wide array of cultures, in an effort to serve meals that will appeal to all of the people whom we serve. Dishes like curries, stir-fries, Mexican dishes such as tacos, burritos, and enchiladas, American fare such as burgers and pizza, Italian meals such as lasagna and chicken cacciatore, and Southern foods such as collard greens and black-eyed peas, all appear on our menus.

After implementing the Heart Healthy Diet, we have seen a gradual decrease in body weight in some of our overweight and obese guests, as well as an improvement in lipid profiles and blood sugar levels. The diet is well-received by the people we serve as well as our staff and many comment on the noticeable health benefits they experience.

In addition to our diet, many of our campuses offer nutrition and wellness groups as well as fitness and exercise groups. We also have a robust Zumba program, with two trained staff at each campus to hold classes for the people that we serve and staff. We conduct cooking groups at our campuses to give the people that we serve the valuable life skill of being able to cook for themselves. We have also produced the Crestwood Cookbook which can be gifted to the people that we serve or staff so that they can learn to cook many of the meals from our diet. Our staff also receive nutrition and wellness education so they can demonstrate and support healthy living for the people we serve.

**Our goal is to model healthy behaviors for the people we serve, to not only enhance their health while they are with us, but to educate them so that they can continue to eat and live well when they leave us for lower levels of care.**

