A TASTE OF LOW FAT

ASIAN FOODS

healthy recipes for a healthy heart
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Forword

"I am delighted to recommend this recipe book to all lovers of Indian food, whether South Asians or not. We all know it makes sense to have a healthy diet, but many of us don’t know where we are going wrong or what we should be doing. Indian food has the potential to be one of the healthiest of diets, as it is rich in spices, vegetables and pulses. Unfortunately, it can sometimes be rich in fat, too.

This British Heart Foundation book, written by Seri Shaj, offers some valuable tips and recipes to help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease—without sacrificing the authentic taste of Indian cooking.

I hope it will help and encourage you to enjoy these meals."

Pat Chapman

Pat Chapman
Preface by the British Heart Foundation Medical Director

Food is one of life's great pleasures and good food is essential for health. Sadly, there is a widely held belief that healthy eating is boring. This booklet is proof that it is not!

Coronary disease remains the single most frequent cause of premature death in the UK, but death rates for the disease are 36% higher among South Asian men and 46% higher for women than in the UK population. Dietary factors play a significant part in its development.

The traditional South Asian lifestyle is healthy, but now many Asian families are adopting less healthy Western eating habits and are consuming more sugar, fat and "fast foods". Foods high in saturated fats lead to raised blood cholesterol level, which is a coronary heart disease (CHD) risk factor. A reduction in physical activity also aggravates the tendency to gain weight and physical inactivity itself is itself another risk factor for CHD.

Surveys show that it is not simply how overweight a person is that increases their risk of CHD — it is also where the fat is carried on the body. South Asians tend to carry a higher proportion of body fat around their middle and this is known as "central obesity". Central obesity is associated with CHD and is also linked to insulin resistance and diabetes. Reducing the amount of total fat in the diet, eating more fruit and vegetables and adopting healthier ways to cook are recommended for everyone in the UK, but it is vital that UK South Asians are extra careful about their diets.

Being overweight can also lead to raised blood pressure (hypertension) which is another major risk factor for CHD. Blood pressure is also raised by excess salt in the diet.

A healthy diet is of course only part of the campaign against heart disease, albeit an important one. Quitting cigarettes is an essential feature of any plan to reduce the toll of coronary disease. Regular physical activity is also of value, not only in the prevention of heart disease but in a whole variety of other ways that lead to good health.

The recipes in this book have all been tried and tested. Most of them are common everyday foods that are eaten in many Asian households. Various other dishes can be adapted in the same way.

Enjoy!

Professor B L Pentecost MD FRCP
Medical Director
British Heart Foundation
Asian origin – Indian subcontinent

The Indian sub-continent has a huge diversity of people. There are fourteen major languages and around a hundred dialects. Its cuisine is correspondingly varied and it is impossible to represent it in its entirety.

Food is at the heart of all Asian cultures and is the most important part of their social lifestyle. Each Asian community has its own cooking method and way of adding seasonings to vegetables, meat and fish.

There are many varieties of Asian foods and curries. This book tries to show that it is possible to make almost all Asian dishes with a lower amount of fat and hence lower calories and they taste just as delicious! These are not fancy dishes but normal everyday dishes which are eaten in many Asian households.

The human body does not need the excessive amount of fat that we add to our daily cooking. Try to use a spoon to measure how much oil/ghee is used for cooking each dish and total the amount up for each meal. Try to reduce the amount of fat if this is too much.

This principle can be applied to any dish that you choose to cook for your family. Healthy eating is not only for the adults in the family, but children as well. By slightly altering cooking styles we hope to have a future generation of healthier Asian adults.

It can take approximately a month before you will be able to completely change your palate. Therefore it is important to continue with the change.
Healthy eating means having a balanced diet of at least three meals a day containing each of the five major food groups:

- **Meat and fish or lentils and nuts**
  2 moderate servings each day

- **Milk and milk products**
  3 servings a day – choose reduced fat version

- **Bread/chappati, rice, pasta, potatoes and cereals**
  4 servings each day

- **Vegetables and fruits**
  aim for 3 servings each day

- **Fatty and sugary foods**
  these foods should make up only a small part of your diet.

As a rough guide each portion’s edible weight should be approximately 80g, depending upon your age, sex and activity. For example:

- **Fruits**
  A large slice of melon or pineapple
  A wire glass of juice, an apple, a pear etc.

- **Salad/cereal**
  One bowl

- **Root & green vegetables and dhals**
  2 serving spoons

- **Beans and corn**
  3 serving spoons

- **Dried fruit**
  1/2 serving spoon.

**Healthy eating is to:**
- Eat more bread/chappati, pasta, rice, cereals and potatoes – especially high fibre version.
- Eat more fruit and vegetables.
- Reduce salt and sugar.
- Eat less fried foods particularly deep fried foods.
- Eat less Indian sweets as they are high in saturated fat and sugar.
- Reduce total fat – particularly saturated fat.
- Use polyunsaturated or mono-unsaturated fat instead of saturated fat.

### Losing Weight

Some people tend to put on weight more easily than others. For most it creeps or gradually over a period of a few months or years. Therefore it may take a similar amount of time to lose it. This can be achieved by eating less calories/food than you normally eat and using up the calories by doing some form of physical activity/exercise each day. There is no magic cure! Brisk walking is an excellent start.

Most people usually know where they are going wrong – the idea is not to starve yourself, but to eat three healthy meals each day.

- **Reduce the total quantity of food you eat each day especially fatty and high calories foods.**
- **Eat plenty of cooked/raw vegetables, salads and fruit.** If you eat tinned fruit, have those that are in unsweetened juice rather than syrup.
- **Cut down on alcohol and have sugar-free drinks.**
- **Eat wholesome carbohydrates, bread, pasta, high fibre cereal, rice and potatoes.**
- **Use low fat yoghurt, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk and reduced fat cheese instead of the full-fat versions.**
- **Cut down on all deep fried Indian snacks such as cheddas, aloo, samosas etc., parathas, croissants and chips – they are all high in calories.**
- **Reduce the amount of oil you use in each course – measure it with a spoon. You only need one tablespoon for most curries for a family of 4-6.**
- **Drinks can also be made without fat. Some drinks are starch and high in calories; therefore, have only one bowl with the meal.**
- **Cut out the sweets, especially Indian sweets and puddings, chocolates and pastries.**
- **If you have over indulged one day, then balance it out by eating less in the next few days and exercising more.**