

# Heart-Healthy Living



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States in both men and women, but you can do a lot to protect your heart and stay healthy. Heart-healthy living involves understanding your risks, making healthy choices, and taking steps to reduce your chances of getting heart disease. Coronary heart disease and other types of heart disease cause heart attacks but taking preventative measures can lower your risk of developing heart disease and improve your overall health and well-being.



## Understand Your Risk Factors for Heart Disease

- High blood pressure
- Have high blood cholesterol
- Are overweight or obese
- Pre-diabetes or diabetes
- Smoke
- Do not get regular physical activity
- Have history of preeclampsia
- Have unhealthy eating behaviors
- Are 55 or older for women and 45 or older for men

## Preventing Heart Disease and Reducing Risk

- 1. Get Your Blood Pressure & Cholesterol Checked Routinely:** Your blood pressure is considered high when you have consistent systolic readings of 140mmHg or higher or diastolic readings of 90 mm Hg or higher.
- 2. Choose Heart-Healthy Foods:** Focus on vegetables, fruit, lean protein-rich foods, whole grains, low-fat dairy products and oils and foods high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats. Limit or avoid foods high in sodium, saturated fats, trans fat and foods that contain added sugars. Limit or avoid alcohol.
- 3. Aim for a Healthy Weight:** A healthy weight is considered a BMI (body mass index) between 18.5 and 24.9. It is also important to measure waist circumference. A waist circumference that is more than 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men can increase risk for heart disease and diabetes. If you are overweight or obese, losing just 3-5% of your current weight can lower triglycerides and glucose levels and reduce risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- 4. Manage Stress:** Stress can contribute to high blood pressure and other heart disease risk factors. *Ways to manage stress can include:* talking to a professional counselor, participating in a stress management program, practicing meditation, being physically active, trying relaxation techniques, and talking with friends, family, community or religious support systems.
- 5. Get Regular Physical Activity:** Regular physical activity can help you lose excess weight, improve physical fitness, lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure, lower stress and improve mental health and lower risk for type 2 diabetes, depression and cancer.
- 6. Quit Smoking:** Ask your provider about participating in the *My Health Onsite Tobacco Cessation Vital Investment Program* and work one on one with one of our Tobacco Treatment Specialists.
- 7. Get Enough Quality Sleep:** Sleep plays a very important role in good health and well-being. Not getting enough quality sleep can increase your risk for chronic health problems over time. Ask your provider about participating in the *My Health Onsite Better Sleep Vital Investment Program*.

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