

Go Red For Women[®]

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH GUIDE

Taking Charge of Your Heart Health

Chances are high that you or someone in your family will be affected by Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD) at some point. You can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke if you start early.

Starting in your early 20's, get regular health checkups. Regular checkups let your healthcare providers track changes in your health over time. Schedule a visit with your healthcare provider to get started, and be sure to get your **Well-Woman Visit.**

Some risk factors you can't do anything about. But others you can treat, manage or control with the help of your healthcare advisor.

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KNOW YOUR CHOLESTEROL

Having too much cholesterol in your blood increases your risk of heart diseases and stroke. This happens because cholesterol and other fats can build up, narrow arteries and then be blocked by a blood clot or other particle. This causes the heart or brain to lose its blood supply, resulting in a heart attack or stroke.

A healthy lifestyle is the key basis for reducing your risk for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) risk.

Know your numbers, but treat your risk. Ideal numbers for the general adult population are:

- Total cholesterol less than or equal to 180 mg/dL
- Body mass index (BMI) of less than or equal to 25kg/m²
- Blood Pressure of less than 120/80 mm/Hg
- Fasting blood sugar of less than or equal to 100mg/dL

More Tips

- To improve overall cardiovascular health, we suggest at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise (or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity).
- Thirty minutes a day, five times a week is an easy goal to remember. You will also experience benefits even if you divide your time into two or three segments of 10 to 15 minutes per day.
- For people who would benefit from lowering their blood pressure or cholesterol, we recommend 40 minutes of aerobic exercise of moderate to vigorous intensity three to four times a week to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke.

PREVENTING AND MANAGING DIABETES

Diabetes is a major risk factor for stroke and heart disease. Compared to women without diabetes, women with diabetes have two to four time higher death rates from heart disease. Many people with diabetes also have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. This increases their risk even more.

More Tips

- You have the power to control your weight and blood cholesterol with a low-saturated fat, low-cholesterol diet.
- You need to get a baseline of your fasting glucose by the time you're 45, and may be required to test it more often if you are pregnant, overweight, diabetic or at risk for becoming diabetic.
- Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke. People who have type 2 diabetes and smoke are three times more likely to die of cardiovascular disease than nonsmokers.



SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK OR STROKE

Heart Attack

A heart attack occurs when the blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked, usually by a blood clot. If this clot cuts off the blood flow completely, the part of the heart muscle supplied by that artery begins to die.

Signs of a Heart Attack

1. Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of your chest. It lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
2. Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
3. Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
4. Other signs such as breaking out in cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.
5. Women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

Stroke

Stroke is the number three cause of death of America. It's also a major cause of severe, long-term disability. Stroke and transient ischemic attack (TIA) happen when a blood vessel feeding the brain gets clogged or bursts. The signs of a TIA are like a stroke, but usually last only a few minutes.

Signs of Stroke and TIAs

1. Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
2. Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
3. Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
4. Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
5. Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

If you have any of these signs, don't wait! Call for help! Call 9-1-1. Get to a hospital right away.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, but it raises the risk of stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney failure. It usually can't be cured, but it can be managed. Not treating high blood pressure is dangerous. Make it your mission to fight heart disease by treating and controlling high blood pressure.

Tips for Healthy Blood Pressure

- Eating right is key to preventing and managing high blood pressure, so watch the salt. Follow the American Heart Association's recommendation to keep your sodium intake to 1,500 mg or less each day.
- Avoid stress by finding ways to control your thoughts such as yoga, walking or meditation.
- If you drink, limit alcohol. Keep in mind that for women, moderate drinking is no more than one drink per day.

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BE ACTIVE

Why be physically active?

The facts are clear: By getting at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week you can reduce your risk of heart disease. Without regular physical activity, the body slowly loses its strength and ability to function will.

Tips to help you be active

- Schedule time in your day for physical activity, Make a date to walk during your lunch time at work, or go for a walk with your friends or family in the evening.
- Substitute physical activity where possible. Choose a parking spot that allows you to get a few extra minutes of walking, or take the stairs instead of the elevator. Every little bit helps!
- Pick active outings. Instead of going to the movies, visit a zoo or museum where you can walk around while being entertained.

HEALTHY EATING

Think nutrition. Nutrient-rich foods have vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients. The American Heart Association recommends that you eat a wide variety of nutritious foods daily.

Tips for a Healthy Diet

- Eat slowly, take smaller portions and avoid “seconds.”
- Cook goods in ways that do not add saturated or trans-fat, like baking, boiling, broiling, grilling, roasting or stewing.
- When you really crave a high-calorie food, eat a small amount and forget about it, instead of resisting until you give in and gorge.
- Find a healthy alternative to satisfy your craving. If you're craving something sweet, try slicing into fresh fruits and yogurt.

STOP SMOKING

Tips for Quitting

- Be prepared. Women are more likely to quit smoking for good if they prepare for two things: the last cigarette and the cravings, urges, and feelings that come with quitting.
- Medications can help. Specific medicines can help people quit smoking when used correctly. Talk to your healthcare provider about the options that may work best for you.
- Get support. It can help to recruit a support team. Additional support can be found by looking for programs through hospitals, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association or the American Lung Association.

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