

Adult Health Bulletin



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: PREVENTING HEART DISEASE

There are many ways you can prevent heart disease. Take the time to read over these seven simple ways to lower your risk of heart disease.

1) Get active.

Start small by taking the stairs, parking at the farthest end of the lot or taking walk breaks during the day. Work up to 2½ hours of moderate physical activity every week (for example, 20 minutes of walking each night). By being regularly active, you can improve your strength and stamina while also lowering blood pressure, keeping body weight under control and increasing your HDL (good cholesterol). Exercise also helps prevent bone loss, improves sleep and reduces your risk of certain cancers. Research shows that for some people, each hour of brisk walking may add about 2 hours to their life expectancy.



Continued on the back →



More than 1 in 3 adults has some form of cardiovascular disease.

Continued from page 1

2) Control cholesterol.

High levels of “bad” cholesterol (LDL) can clog arteries, which can increase the likelihood of heart attack and stroke. Good cholesterol (HDL) cleans out the LDL from the arteries. More HDL can be produced by exercising and limiting saturated fats. You should also consider limiting animal fats such as red meats and full-fat dairy while using healthier fats such as vegetable oils. Also limit the intake of trans fats. Your healthcare provider may prescribe medications to keep cholesterol levels in check if needed.

3) Eat better.

Did you know that eating the right foods helps control weight, blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol? It is recommended that you choose fruits and vegetables over empty calorie foods, such as sodas and junk food.

4) Manage blood pressure.

One in three Americans has high blood pressure, but one in five don't know they have it. High blood pressure is called the “silent killer” because it has no symptoms. You can help keep blood pressure in check by eating a heart-healthy diet, exercising regularly, not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting salt and alcohol and taking medication when prescribed.

80 percent of heart disease and stroke can be prevented.

5) Lose weight.

Having extra weight on the body can damage the heart. Fat around the belly increases the risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Losing as few as 10 pounds decreases your heart disease risk. In order to lose weight it is suggested



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that you increase physical activity each week, while reducing the calories you consume.

6) Reduce blood sugar.

Diabetes can quadruple your risk of heart disease. Also, diabetes can cause blindness and nerve disease if left untreated. You can minimize the effect and risk of diabetes by eating right, controlling your weight, exercising and taking medication when prescribed.

7) Stop smoking.

If you are a smoker, consider stopping. Quitting smoking can help prevent heart disease, stroke, cancer and chronic lung disease. The payoff is almost immediate and your risk for health disease lowers to the levels of non-smokers in only a few years.

Love your heart and prevent heart disease by following these simple steps.

SOURCES:

American Heart Association. Make the effort to prevent heart disease with life's simple 7. Accessed at www.heart.org on Dec. 5, 2012.

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