

# HEALTHFUL TIPS

HEALTH AND FITNESS TIPS FOR YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY



## HEART HEALTH

GET INFORMED AND TAKE CONTROL WITH THESE HEART SMART TIPS

The heart symbolizes Valentine's Day, making February is a great time to take a look at steps you can take to improve your family's heart health. According to The American Heart Association, heart disease is still the number one killer of Americans. It's easy to take our hearts for granted. After all they beat more than 100,000 times each day with no deliberate effort on our part. The risk factors for heart disease that are beyond our control are a family history of heart disease, diabetes and age (65 and older). Both men and women are equally at risk. Most risk factors are controlled by lifestyle choices; cigarette smoking, being overweight by 30 percent or more, hypertension, high cholesterol levels (high LDL cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol, and high triglycerides), a stressful lifestyle, and a sedentary lifestyle. Get informed. Take control. Reduce your risk. Help your children develop healthful lifestyle habits.

### LEARN THE SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK—

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

Learn the signs, but remember this: Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, have it checked out. Minutes matter! Fast action can save lives — maybe your own. Don't wait more than five minutes to call 9-1-1.

### LIFESTYLE MATTERS

- Being active brings many benefits for your heart and your health. Regular physical activity can help you improve your blood pressure and blood sugar levels and reduce your risk for chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, depression, and breast and colon cancer. For benefits, you need 30 minutes or more of exercise daily. If you are not able to do 30 minutes all at once, break it into 3 10-minute segments. To lose weight, exercise 30-60 minutes daily.
- Choose heart healthy foods. Nutrient-rich foods have vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients but are lower in calories. To get the nutrients you need, choose foods like lean meat, fish and poultry, vegetables, fruits, whole-grain products and fat-free or low-fat dairy products most often. Fish containing omega-3 fatty acids (for example, salmon, trout, and herring) may help lower your risk of death from coronary artery disease.
- Freeze fruits such as bananas, grapes and orange slices to make them more fun to eat.
- Make extra and freeze food in portion-controlled containers.
- Have a tray of ready to eat veggies and fruits in the refrigerator.
- Use spray margarine to get more flavor with less fat.

*"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."*

*~Helen Keller~*

- Look for smaller containers of your favorite healthy foods to pack for snacks or lunches or portion yourself.
- Get back to the basics—replace processed foods with fresh options.
- Use science. Studies show that the more foods we have to choose from, the more we eat. Have a variety of healthy options available and a limited number of less healthy foods to choose from.
- Choose your foods in their closest to nature form and limit processed foods, foods and beverages with added sugars, foods with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats, high fat foods, limit sodium to 2300 mg daily, and if you drink—do so in moderation (no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 for men), keep an eye on portion sizes.
- Knowledge is power. Know your risk. Get the numbers (blood pressure, blood sugar, total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides, and waist circumference) and calculate your risk factor at <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3003499>.
- Manage stress. Learn stress management techniques such as the relaxation response, meditation, yoga, deep breathing and the art of saying, "no" to unwanted responsibilities. Living in a constant state of stress impacts all areas of your physical and mental health.