

Heart Health

Just like an engine makes a car go, your heart keeps your body running. As you grow older, some changes in the heart and blood vessels are normal, but others are caused by disease.

Choices you might make every day can contribute to heart disease. Do you smoke? Are you overweight? Do you spend the day sitting at a desk or in front of the TV? Do you avoid doing exercise? Do you drink a lot of alcohol? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, making healthy lifestyle changes might help you prevent or delay heart disease.

Take the following steps to keep your heart healthy:

Be more physically active. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on most or all days of the week. Every day is best. It doesn't have to be done all at once—10-minute periods will do. Start by doing activities you enjoy—brisk walking, dancing, swimming, bicycling, or playing basketball or tennis.

If you smoke, quit. It's never too late to get some benefit from quitting smoking.

Follow a heart healthy diet. Choose low-fat foods and those that are low in salt. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and foods high in fiber. Following a healthy eating plan and being physically active might help you.

Keep a healthy weight. Your healthcare provider can check your weight and height to learn your BMI (body mass index). A BMI of 25 or higher means you are at risk for heart disease, as well as diabetes and other health conditions. Following a healthy eating plan and being physically active might help you.



Quick Tip

For information on heart-healthy eating plans, visit the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at NIH website at www.nhlbi.nih.gov

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- Read more tips for adding physical activity to your day.
- Print useful tools.
- Share your exercise story.



National Institute on Aging

National Institutes of Health

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

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