

Prevent heart disease with healthy habits

When it comes to heart health, the choices you make matter. You can greatly lower your risk for heart disease by taking small steps every day to keep your heart healthy. You'll improve your overall well-being at the same time.

Build a healthy diet

Eating right helps you control heart disease risk factors like high cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure, and weight. Build your meals around mostly fresh, nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits, veggies, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, nuts, and legumes. Try to limit salty processed foods, alcohol, red meat, and sugary drinks and desserts.

Don't smoke

There's no such thing as a safe tobacco product. Every type of smoking — even secondhand smoke — increases the risk of heart disease and heart attack. The good news is that if you do smoke, quitting now can still make a difference. Talk to your doctor about support programs or products that can make it easier to quit.

Exercise regularly

Regular exercise lowers the risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, and being overweight. Aim for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, like brisk walking or biking, each week.* That's 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

Lower your stress

Some people cope with stress by overeating, drinking, or smoking. These can all increase the risk for heart disease. Finding healthy ways to deal with stress can improve your mood and health. Try meditation, therapy, breathing exercises, or working out.

References:

* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: *Prevent Heart Disease* (accessed November 2021): [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

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Cleveland Clinic: *Stress Management and Emotional Health* (accessed November 2021): my.clevelandclinic.org.

American Heart Association: *8 Things You Can Do to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke* (accessed November 2021): [heart.org](https://www.heart.org).