MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Being overweight — especially around the middle of the body — raises the risk of heart disease because of:

- High cholesterol, which can cause blockages in your arteries
- High blood pressure, which occurs when your heart has to work harder

KEEPING A HEALTHY WEIGHT ALSO REDUCES THE RISK OF DIABETES

The risk of heart disease is higher if the waist measurement is greater than:

- ♂ **40 INCHES** FOR MEN
- ♀ **35 INCHES** FOR WOMEN

PREVENT INFECTIONS

Certain infections may lead to heart problems. For instance, gum disease may be a risk factor for heart and blood vessel diseases. So brush and floss daily. Get regular dental checkups too.

Other illnesses caused by infections can make existing heart problems worse. Vaccines help protect against infectious diseases.

EAT A HEART-HEALTHY DIET

A healthy diet can help protect the heart, improve blood pressure and cholesterol, and lower the risk of type 2 diabetes.

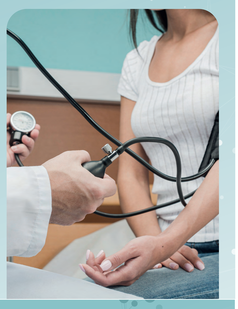
CHOOSE:

- Vegetables and fruits.
- Beans or other legumes.
- Lean meats and fish.
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy foods.
- Whole grains.
- Healthy fats such as olive oil and avocado.

GET HEALTH SCREENING TESTS

High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage the heart and blood vessels. But if you don't get checked for these conditions, you won't know if you have them. Regular screening tests can tell you your numbers and whether you need to take action.

- Blood pressure should be measured at least once every two years.
- Cholesterol screenings should be every five years, but increase in frequency as you get older.
- Screening is recommended starting at age 45, but earlier if you have other risk factors.



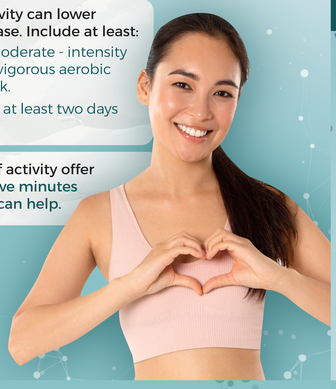
GET YOUR HEART PUMPING

AIM FOR 30 TO 60 MINUTES OF ACTIVITY DAILY

Regular physical activity can lower the risk of heart disease. Include at least:

- 150 minutes of moderate - intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity each week.
- Strength training at least two days per week.

Even shorter bouts of activity offer heart benefits. Just five minutes of moving every day can help.



MANAGE STRESS

Ongoing stress can play a role in higher blood pressure and other risk factors for heart disease. Some people also cope with stress in unhealthy ways, such as overeating, drinking or smoking.

You can boost your health by finding other ways to manage stress.

HEALTHY TACTICS INCLUDE:

01 physical activity
02 relaxation exercises
03 mindfulness
04 yoga
05 meditation

TOBACCO CAUSES HEARTACHE

One of the best things you can do for your heart is to stop smoking, vaping or using smokeless tobacco.

Chemicals in tobacco can damage the heart and blood vessels. Cigarette smoke lowers the oxygen in the blood, which raises blood pressure and heart rate.

GET QUALITY SLEEP

People who don't get enough sleep have a higher risk of obesity, high blood pressure, heart attack, diabetes and depression.

Talk to your doctor if you feel like you get enough sleep but you're still tired throughout the day. You may need to be evaluated for sleep apnea, a condition that can raise your risk of heart disease.

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