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Living a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle

01

Wholesome Habits Lead to Holistic Heart Health

Almost every decision you make across every aspect of your health—your nutrition, physical activity, personal knowledge and personal level of stress—will have a positive or negative impact on your heart health. Live a holistically healthy lifestyle to greatly reduce your risk of heart disease! How can you get started?

Get some exercise. For most healthy people, being physically active at least 150 minutes each week will increase physical and mental wellbeing across the board, which of course includes reducing your risk of heart disease.

Don't smoke cigarettes or drink in excess. This one is kind of a “duh,” but it still needs to be said. Tobacco and alcohol weaken your heart, stiffen or clog your arteries, and often lead to additional unhealthy behaviors (you're probably not eating a fresh spring salad after the bar closes). In general, two drinks per day for men and one drink for women is considered moderate.

Reduce your stress. We know, we know—easier said than done. But excess stress causes your body to release adrenaline, which temporarily raises your blood pressure and makes your heart work harder. Ongoing high levels of stress combined with other factors, such as poor diet, lack of exercise or lack of sleep, can wreak havoc on your heart and your overall wellbeing. Try breathing techniques or brief daily meditation breaks to reduce your stress level.



Know your numbers and consider your family history.

Knowledge is power. If you have high blood pressure, cholesterol or weight, or if your family has a history of heart disease, it is important to take extra precaution!

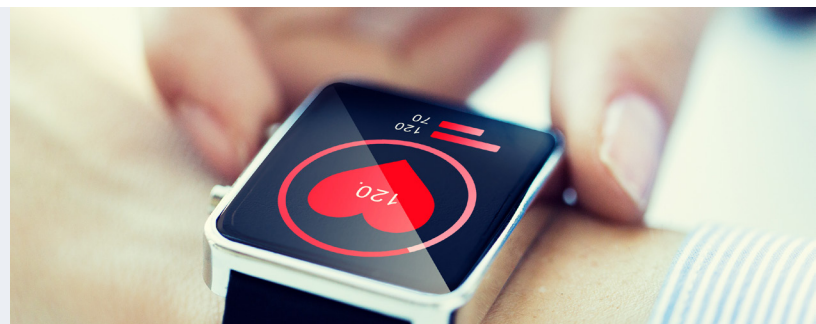
Sleep the recommended 6-8 hours each night. For most people, this amount of sleep improves focus and energy while reducing risks of heart disease and other health risks.

Eat a nutritious diet. Keep reading for tips on eating heart-healthy foods.

Monthly Activity

Four Chambers of Heart Health

Almost everything you do can affect your heart, which is why this activity helps you enhance your health in four different areas—activity, nutrition, health education and stress management.





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Heart Disease and Sleep

02

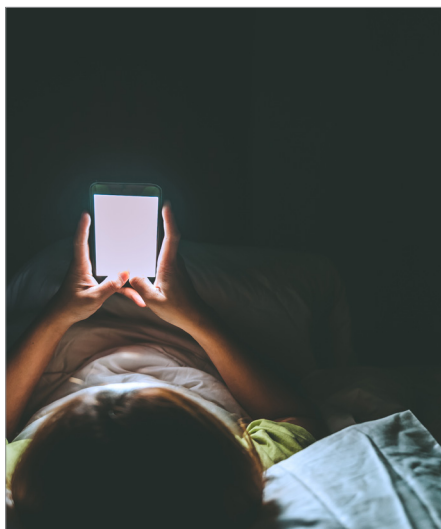
Stronger Heart, Better Moods: A Good Night's Sleep Is a Win-Win

Do you get the doctor-recommended six to eight hours of sleep each night? If you consistently sleep less than that, you have an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and stroke, regardless of your age, weight, smoking history and activity level. That sounds scary, but it's also an extremely solvable problem!

Try some of the tips below to get a better night's rest. If nothing helps, you may want to consult a doctor and see if they can recommend another way for you to enjoy the benefits of a good night's rest.

Shun Shiny Screens

The National Sleep Organization found that the light emitted by cell phones, computers, tablets, and televisions can restrain the production of the hormone melatonin, which makes it harder to fall and stay asleep. Try to find screen-free ways to relax at least 30 - 60 minutes before bed.



Sleep and Wake at the Same Time Each Day

Most parents would agree that a consistent bedtime routine helps kids get to sleep faster and reduces nighttime hassle. But the same is true for adults! Your body will adjust to the rhythm of sleeping and rising at the same time of day (even on weekends, if your schedule allows), which will help you fall asleep faster on a consistent basis.



Try to find screen-free ways to relax at least 30 - 60 minutes before bed.

Eliminate Caffeine After 2:00 P.M.

If you're used to drinking coffee all day, this can be a difficult change to make. For help, try turning to herbal teas or try a few infused water recipes.





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Eat This, Not That

03

The Heart-Health Edition

Eat This	Not That	Why
<p>1 Whole grains (whole wheat bread, etc.)</p>	<p>Enriched flour (white bread, pastries; check food labels to make sure enriched flour is not listed among the ingredients.)</p>	<p>Whole grains are excellent sources of dietary fiber, which have been shown to improve elevated blood cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.</p>
<p>2 Water or unsweetened ice tea</p>	<p>Sugary soda or juice</p>	<p>Excess sugar is very, very bad for you! 'Nuff said.</p>
<p>3 Almonds and walnuts</p>	<p>Chips and other salty snacks</p>	<p>Almonds are magnesium- and antioxidant-rich, which helps you maintain healthy blood pressure, LDL and blood sugar levels.</p>
<p>4 Chicken, white fish and salmon</p>	<p>Red meats or fatty meats, such as bacon</p>	<p>Lean meats reduce your bad fat intake and fish will provide heart-friendly omega-3.</p>
<p>5 Fresh fruits and vegetables</p>	<p>Sugary juices, fruit-flavored desserts and canned vegetables</p>	<p>Fresh fruits (particularly strawberries, blueberries and raspberries) are rich in antioxidants and high in fiber, while fresh veggies (especially leafy greens) contain less sodium and more heart-healthy nutrients than their canned cousins.</p>
<p>6 Low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt</p>	<p>Whole milk, fatty cheeses and ice cream</p>	<p>Too much high-fat dairy can lead to increased weight and risk of heart disease.</p>

BONUS TIPS

- 1. Every meal, fill half your plate with healthy fresh fruits and vegetables!** You'll have less space for unhealthy foods, and you'll be more likely to get the nutrients you need.
- 2. Craving a pizza? Experiment with your own homemade healthy pies:**
 - **Use a thin, whole-wheat crust.** This healthy option is becoming more and more popular in restaurants and grocery stores, and even if you don't like whole wheat breads, the switch is barely noticeable after the crust is crispy.
 - **Add vegetables** to your pizza (peppers, mushrooms, spinach). If you're feeling adventurous, increase your options by removing the pizza sauce and covering your crust with olive oil and cheese: it will taste great with eggplant, artichokes, broccoli, carrots and more. Experiment until you find the right options for you.
 - Don't like greens on your pizza? **Make a side salad** to make sure you get some veggies with your dairy and carbs.

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Recipe

04

Mediterranean Fish Tacos

Fish tacos make a fulfilling meal without feeling heavy in your stomach.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup thinly sliced green onions
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Juice and zest from 1 lime
- 1 minced clove of garlic
- 1 ¼ pounds white fish filets (such as red snapper, cod, haddock or tilapia)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 8 tortillas (8 inches in size)
- 2 cups shredded lettuce
- 2 cups diced tomatoes
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine yogurt, green onions, cilantro, lime juice and zest, garlic, salt and pepper in a bowl to make a crema; set aside.
2. Combine cumin, paprika and red pepper in a small bowl and sprinkle over both sides of fish filets, then place the fish on a baking sheet brushed with olive oil.
3. Bake at 425 degrees F for 8-10 minutes or until the fish flakes easily with a fork.
4. Heat the tortillas according to package directions. Pull apart the fish with a fork and divide it evenly between the tortillas.
5. Top with lettuce, tomatoes and crema. Serve immediately.

Total Time (Cook and Prep): 30 minutes

Servings: Makes 3-5 tacos



NUTRITION INFO

(per serving)

275 calories

10 g fat

35 mg cholesterol

380 mg sodium

27 g carbohydrates

4 g fiber

18 g protein