

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HEART HEALTH MONTH



Do you take care of your family? Yes. Do you take care of your home? Of course. Do you take care of your heart? Probably not.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Each year, 1 in 3 women's deaths in the United States is due to heart disease or stroke. The good news? It is also one of the most preventable causes of death. Lifestyle changes can prevent 80 percent of cardiac events, such as premature heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Manage blood pressure

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. When your blood pressure stays within a healthy range, you reduce the strain

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➔ Continued from page 1

on your heart, arteries and kidneys, which keeps you healthier longer. Blood pressure of or less than 120/80 mmHg indicates a healthy heart.

To manage blood pressure, you should:

- Eat a heart-healthy diet, which includes reducing sodium.
- Get regular physical activity and maintain a healthy weight.
- Manage stress, limit alcohol and avoid tobacco smoke.

Control cholesterol

High cholesterol contributes to plaque, which can clog arteries and lead to heart disease and stroke.

To control cholesterol, you should:

- Avoid tobacco products
- Eat a heart-healthy diet
- Engage in physical activity

Reduce blood sugar

Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose (or blood sugar) that our bodies use for energy. Over time, high levels of blood sugar can damage your heart, kidneys, eyes and nerves. Fasting blood sugar ideal number is less than 100 mg/dL.

To reduce blood sugar, you should:

- Reduce consumption of simple sugars, such as those found in soda, candy and sugary desserts.
- Get regular physical activity.

Get active and maintain a healthy body weight

Living an active life is one of the most rewarding gifts you can give yourself and those you love. Simply put, daily physical activity increases your length and quality of life. Exercising 30 minutes a day reduces heart disease by 30 to 40 percent and stroke by 25 percent. A BMI of or less than 25 kg/m² indicates a healthy weight.

To get active, you should engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week. For example that might be 30 minutes of brisk walking, five times per week.

RESOURCES:

- American Heart Association, <https://www.goredforwomen.org/live-healthy/first-steps-to-prevent-heart-disease-and-be-heart-healthy/lifes-simple-7>
- American Heart Association, <https://www.goredforwomen.org/know-your-numbers>

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