



## Preventing Heart Disease: Healthy Living Habits



Choosing healthy meal and snack options can help you avoid heart disease and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.

By living a healthy lifestyle, you can help keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, and sugar normal and lower your risk for heart disease and heart attack. A healthy lifestyle includes the following:

- Eating a healthy diet.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Getting enough physical activity.
- Not smoking or using other forms of tobacco.
- Limiting alcohol use.

## Healthy Diet

Choosing healthful meal and snack options can help you avoid heart disease and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and fewer processed foods.

Eating foods low in saturated fats, trans fat, and cholesterol and high in fiber can help prevent high cholesterol. Limiting salt (sodium) in your diet also can lower your blood pressure. Limiting sugar in your diet can lower your blood sugar level to prevent or help control diabetes.

For more information on healthy diet and nutrition, see [CDC's Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program website](#).

## Healthy Weight

Being overweight or obese increases your risk for heart disease. To determine if your weight is in a healthy range, doctors often calculate your body mass index (BMI). If you know your weight and height, you can [calculate your BMI](#) at [CDC's Assessing Your Weight website](#). Doctors sometimes also use waist and hip measurements to calculate excess body fat. They may use special equipment to calculate excess body fat and hydration status.

## Physical Activity

Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure, cholesterol, and sugar levels. For adults, the Surgeon General recommends 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, like brisk walking or bicycling, every week. Children and adolescents should get 1 hour of physical activity every day.

For more information, see [CDC's Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Web site](#).

## No Smoking

Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease. Your doctor can suggest ways to help you quit.

For more information about tobacco use and quitting, see [CDC's Smoking & Tobacco Use Web site](#).

## Limited Alcohol

Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can raise your blood pressure. Men should have no more than 2 drinks per day, and women only 1. For more information, visit [CDC's Alcohol and Public Health Web site](#).

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