

8 Habits to Boost Heart Health (Continuation)

2. Add more whole grains to your diet

Research shows that eating fiber-rich foods like whole grains can protect your heart.⁵ Whole grains help improve cholesterol levels and lower the risk for heart disease. Whole-grain foods can also help you manage your weight and control blood sugar levels.



- ✓ Eat more whole-grain breads, pasta, oatmeal, and rice.
- ✓ When baking, replace half of the refined flour called for in the recipe with whole-grain flour.
- ✓ Make sandwiches or toast with whole-grain bread.

3. Choose healthy fats

Fats found in fried foods, ice cream, cheese, milk chocolate, red meat, and many processed foods increase your risk for heart problems. On the other hand, healthy fats protect your heart.



- ✓ Use healthy vegetable oils (canola, soy, olive, etc.) for cooking and baking.
- ✓ Eat more olives, avocados, nuts, and seeds.
- ✓ Add fish to your diet 1 to 2 times a week.

4. Limit sodium (salt)

Most people eat too much sodium, and may not even realize it. Processed foods like pizza, frozen

Steps to improve heart health
<http://tinyurl.com/vdvn65w>

dinners, and fast food are especially high in sodium. Too much can lead to high blood pressure and damage your heart. Aim to eat no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

5. Don't smoke

Avoid secondhand smoke. If you smoke, quit! After you stop, your heart begins to grow stronger right away. Within as little as two years, your risk of a heart attack is nearly the same as a non-smoker.

6. Get regular exercise

Regular exercise is important for keeping your heart healthy. Aim to get at least 30 minutes of exercise five days a week.⁶ Make time strength training two days a week.



- ✓ Take a 10-minute walk each morning and afternoon.
- ✓ Go to the gym. Try jogging or running. Or take a group exercise class.
- ✓ Yard work and vigorous house cleaning counts as exercise too.

7. Manage stress in healthy ways

Studies show that people with high stress levels at work or home have higher rates of heart disease. Learning to manage stress in healthy ways is good for your heart.⁷

- ✓ Limit your stress load. Don't over commit. Learn to say "No" and "I need more help."

Are you at risk for heart disease?
<https://tinyurl.com/s2s7skd>

- ✓ Get adequate rest daily.
- ✓ Make time to exercise, relax, and do fun things.
- ✓ Don't use alcohol or other addictive substances to manage stress.
- ✓ Develop a good support system. Talking with family members, friends, or co-workers about stress in your life can help.

8. Get regular checkups

Visit your doctor at least once a year for a check-up. Preventive care and exams can make a difference. Just ask Kevin Smith.

Want to keep your heart healthy for years to come? Now is always the best time to start.

Ticker-Data About Heart Health



Ready to learn a little more about your heart to keep it healthy? Check out this ticker data:

100,000

Average number of times heart beats per day

6

Number of quarts of blood the heart pumps through the body every 20 seconds

2.5 billion

Average number of beats the heart makes in a lifetime

30%

Average reduction in heart disease risk from eating more plant-based foods, less red meat and more olive oil

500,000

Average number of heart bypass surgeries doctors perform every year

647,457

Number of people who die from heart disease each year

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