

HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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Men's Health Month—Heart Health

Heart disease is the most common cause of death for men in the United States. A healthy diet and lifestyle are the most common contributors to good cardiovascular health. Other conditions you may experience as you age include diabetes and high blood pressure. Modest changes to your diet can help to reduce your risk of developing these diseases.

Because cardiovascular disease interferes with your heart's ability to pump blood through your body, it can keep you from enjoying all of your day's normal activities; working, time with friends and family, playing with your children or grandchildren, climbing stairs and even having sex.

Look at the list of statements below. If any of them are true about you, make an appointment to see your healthcare provider today. Just one "Yes" answer means you are at risk. Two "Yes" answers quadruples your risk. Three "Yes" answers increases your risk by 10 times:

- I'm 45 or older. (Your risk of developing cardiovascular disease doubles each decade.)
- An immediate family member (father, mother, brother, sister) was diagnosed with high blood pressure or some other kind of heart condition before age 55.
- I'm African American.
- I get little or no exercise.
- I'm overweight or obese.
- I eat a lot of salty foods and/or I add salt to what I'm eating.
- My cholesterol is high.
- I smoke. (If you do, you are two to four times more likely to develop heart disease than a nonsmoker.)
- I have high blood pressure.
- I use recreational drugs, such as cocaine.
- I'm under a lot of stress (at work and/or at home).
- I drink more than two alcoholic drinks every day.
- I drink a lot of coffee (not decaf) or other caffeinated beverages.
- I have diabetes. (More than 80% of people with diabetes die of some kind of CVD.)
- I'm taking prescription medications that affect blood pressure.

8 Tips to Prevent Heart Disease & Stroke

1. **Take responsibility for your health.** The greatest risk is ignorance or misinformation.
2. **Know your risks.** If your parents, grandparents, or other relatives were afflicted with or died of heart disease, diabetes or stroke, your risk is much greater.
3. **Don't smoke or expose yourself to second-hand smoke.** This increases the risks of heart disease, lung disease, peripheral vascular disease and stroke.
4. **Maintain a healthy blood pressure.** HBP is known as "the silent killer" as it goes without symptoms in most individuals. HBP causes wear and tear of the delicate inner lining of your blood vessels.
5. **Monitor your cholesterol.** Abnormal or high blood lipids (fats) are a major contributor to cardiovascular disease.
6. **Limit your calories.** Obesity is caused by consuming more calories than your body burns. Abdominal obesity is the major risk.
7. **Make exercise a daily habit.** Walking two miles a day is optimal for overall health, and those two miles of walking do not have to be done all at once. Exercise does more than burn calories; it also activates genes that are beneficial to health in other ways.
8. **Reduce stress.** Stress contributes to cardiovascular disease and, if severe, can cause a heart attack or sudden death.



Take care of your body and it will take care of you!



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National Safety Month: Heat Illness Can Be Fatal

Heatstroke

Heatstroke occurs when the ability to sweat fails and body temperature rises quickly. Heatstroke is often fatal, and those who survive may have permanent damage to their organs.

Someone experiencing heatstroke will have extremely hot skin, and an altered mental state, ranging from slight confusion to coma. Seizures also can result. Ridding the body of excess heat is crucial for survival.

- Move the person into a half-sitting position in the shade
- Call for emergency medical help immediately
- Humidity below 75%...spray the victim with water and fan them vigorously, humidity above 75%...apply ice to neck, armpits or groin.
- Do not give aspirin or acetaminophen
- Do not give the victim anything to drink

Heat Exhaustion

When the body loses an excessive amount of salt and water, heat exhaustion can set in. Symptoms are similar to those of the flu and can include severe thirst, fatigue, headache, nausea, vomiting and, sometimes, diarrhea. Other symptoms include profuse sweating, clammy or pale skin, dizziness, rapid pulse and normal or slightly elevated body temperature. Uncontrolled heat exhaustion can evolve into heatstroke, so make sure to treat the victim quickly.

- Move them to a shaded or air-conditioned area
- Give them water or other cool, nonalcoholic beverages
- Apply wet towels or having them take a cool shower

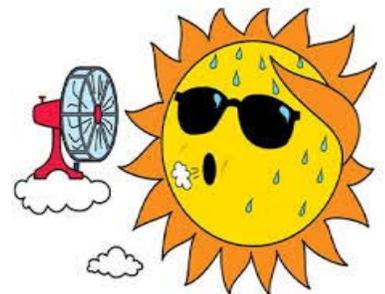
Heat cramps

Heat cramps are muscle spasms that usually affect the legs or abdominal muscles, often after physical activity. Excessive sweating reduces salt levels in the body, which can result in heat cramps.

- Sit or lie down in the shade.
- Drink cool water or a sports drink.
- Stretch affected muscles.
- Seek medical attention if you have heart problems or if the cramps don't get better in an hour.

If outdoors on hot days:

- Drink more liquid than you think you need and avoid alcohol
- Wear loose, lightweight clothing and a hat
- Replace salt lost from sweating by drinking fruit juice or sports drinks
- Avoid spending time outdoors during the hottest part of the day, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Wear sunscreen; sunburn affects the body's ability to cool itself
- Pace yourself when you run or otherwise exert your body



When it's hot...Water, Rest, Shade!

