



Preventing Heart Disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. There are some risk factors you can't change such as increasing age, gender, and heredity but there are several other steps you can take to prevent heart disease.

Quit Smoking

You know that smoking is bad for you but did you know that your risk of developing coronary heart disease is 2-4 times that of nonsmokers? Smoking is a powerful risk factor on its own, but when combined with other risk factors your chance of coronary disease is greatly increased. If you are a nonsmoker exposed to second hand smoke your risk of heart disease also increases.

Control Your Cholesterol Levels

If your cholesterol is high it builds up on the walls of your arteries and can put you at risk for coronary heart disease. You can lower your LDL "bad" cholesterol and raise your HDL "good" cholesterol by maintaining your weight, exercising, limiting the amount of saturated and trans fats you consume, and eating foods such as oatmeal, walnuts, omega-3 fatty acids, and foods fortified with plant sterols and stanols.

Lower Your Blood Pressure

High blood pressure makes your heart work harder and increases your risk of stroke, heart attack, kidney failure, and congestive heart failure. You can lower your blood pressure or prevent high blood pressure by eating healthful foods, exercising, managing stress, maintaining a healthy weight, and quitting smoking.

Alcohol and Heart Disease

Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure, cause heart failure, and lead to stroke. But according to the American Heart Association (AHA), consuming alcohol in moderation (approximately one drink for women and two drinks for men per day) can help lower the risk of heart disease. AHA does not recommend that non-drinkers start using alcohol or that drinkers increase the amount they consume.

Wellness