



**TIPS FOR
HEART-HEALTHY
LIVING**

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HOW TO YOUR HEART

FAMILY FEATURES

It beats about 100,000 times a day, 35 million times a year. It pumps blood through the body three times every minute, taking that blood on the equivalent of a 12,000 mile trek every 24 hours. Even at rest, it works twice as hard as the leg muscles of a person running. The heart is a remarkable, vital muscle that warrants great care and maintenance. Yet 1 in every 4 deaths is due to heart disease.

While there are some inherent risk factors such as aging or family history, poor lifestyle choices are often to blame for the onset of heart disease. The good news is that making better lifestyle choices reduces your risk of heart disease — and it's not as hard as you might think.

Heart-Healthy Living Works

A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that people who most closely followed the diet and lifestyle recommendations of the American Heart Association (AHA) had a 76 percent lower risk of dying from heart disease, and a 51 percent lower risk of all-cause deaths than those who didn't follow recommendations as closely.

The study also found that only a small number of people follow all or most of the AHA guidelines for heart health. So it's not surprising that heart disease is still the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States.

But it doesn't have to be that way. You can start making changes today that will help make your heart healthier in the long run.

3 Changes You Can Make

1 Eat Better

One of your best weapons against cardiovascular disease is a healthy diet. Eating a wide variety of foods that are low in fat, cholesterol and salt, but rich in nutrients can help protect your heart. Instead of thinking about a healthy diet in terms of what you can't eat, think about it in terms of what you can eat. Add more:

- **Fruits and vegetables** — about 4 1/2 cups a day
- **Whole grain foods** — at least three 1-ounce servings a day
- **Fish** — at least two 3 1/2-ounce servings a week
- **Nuts, legumes and seeds** — at least four servings a week

About 25 percent of the cholesterol in your blood comes from the foods you eat. Eating healthy foods low in cholesterol, trans fats and saturated fats, as well as foods that are high in fiber, can help keep cholesterol levels in check.

Another way to help control cholesterol levels is by incorporating soy protein into your healthy diet. An extensive body of research has shown that soy-based diets can reduce LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) and triglycerides, and raise HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol).

One of the key components in soy's cholesterol lowering properties is something called lunasin, a naturally occurring soy peptide. It was found to work at the earlier stage of cholesterol production in the body, or at what's known as the epigenetic level. This indicated that heart disease and other hereditary conditions might be controllable by adding lunasin to your diet. Research on lunasin was so promising that scientists found a way to extract lunasin from soybeans so that it could be made available in a pure form. Lunasin content in soy-based foods varies by product and by brand. For example, LunaRich soy powder delivers the lunasin equivalent of 25 grams of soy protein. To get that same amount from other foods, you would need to drink approximately 32 ounces of soy milk, or eat approximately 12 ounces of tofu. Learn more about lunasin at www.reliv.com/lunasin.

The Food and Drug Administration approved the health claim that "25 grams of soy protein per day as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease." Additional research over the last decade indicates that soy, and a peptide within soy called lunasin, could work to prevent a variety of other hereditary health conditions.



2 Get Moving

According to the AHA, nearly 70 percent of Americans don't get the physical activity they need. But daily physical activity can increase your quality and length of life. Moderate exercise can help you lose weight, reduce your chances of stroke, diabetes and heart disease complications, lower your blood pressure and prevent other serious medical complications.

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity a day, five times per week. Here are some easy ways to get moving:

- **Start walking** — Walk just fast enough to get your heart rate up. Try taking brisk, 10-minute walks throughout the day. Park farther away from your destination. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk the dog after dinner or walk to a neighborhood destination instead of driving.
- **Do chores** — Outdoor chores like gardening, raking leaves and washing the car are good ways to get moving. Cleaning house does it, too. Try turning on some music and dancing while doing chores.

Even small changes like these can give you health benefits, but you'll see bigger benefits when you increase the duration, frequency and intensity of your activities. Always talk with your doctor to find out if there are any activities that you should not be doing.

3 Lose Weight

Being overweight is a risk factor for heart disease all on its own. Extra weight puts more burden on your heart, lungs, blood vessels and bones. Being overweight increases the risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, as well. Losing even 10 pounds can produce a significant reduction in blood pressure.

- **Talk to your doctor** — Find out your body mass index (BMI), which is your body weight relative to your height. Find out what your BMI should be, and find out what your calorie intake should be for someone of your age, gender and level of physical activity.
- **Keep track of what you eat** — This will tell you a lot about your eating habits and help you make smart decisions, like controlling portion sizes and choosing nutrient-rich foods.
- **Set reasonable goals** — Don't go for fat diets that claim you'll lose 10 pounds in a week. Slow and steady weight loss is more likely to stay off, and you'll be healthier in the long run.

The good news is, if you put steps one and two into place — eating healthier foods and getting more active — step three should be a natural by-product of your efforts.

Your heart works hard for you — start taking better care of it today so that it can keep working for you for a long time.