



# Help your heart



You put your heart into everything you do, so you've got to keep it healthy. But heart health doesn't come naturally for many of us. In fact, each year heart disease kills more people than any other cause around the world.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, we need to take better care of our tickers!

## Is heart health in your blood?

Having a close family member with heart disease raises your risk. Your family history is out of your control, but by making healthy choices about your lifestyle, you can better your odds.

## Show your heart some love with these 5 healthy habits

After all your heart does for you, don't you think it deserves a little TLC?<sup>2</sup>

- **Get moving.** Aim for 30 minutes of blood-pumping exercise each day. Whether you go for a long run or take a few short walks, any activity that gets your heart beating faster is good.
- **Guard your heart from tobacco.** If you smoke, stop. Quitting smoking might be one of the toughest things you'll ever do, but you're worth the effort. A year after your last cigarette, you'll have cut your risk of heart disease in half.
- **Eat smart.** You've heard that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, right? Well, it holds true for women, too. A healthy diet is the key to a healthy heart. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean meat, fish, beans, peas and lentils. Stay away from processed and packaged foods. Drink plenty of water, and don't have more than one or two alcoholic drinks in a day.
- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Keeping your weight in a healthy range will lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and other problems.
- **Check your numbers.** Having high blood pressure, cholesterol or glucose levels raises your risk for heart problems. See your doctor for regular checkups, so you can keep track of your levels and keep them where they need to be.

To learn more about keeping your heart healthy, schedule a visit with your doctor.



#### Sources

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization website: Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) (accessed November 2016): [http://www.who.int/cardiovascular\\_diseases/en/](http://www.who.int/cardiovascular_diseases/en/)

<sup>2</sup> World Heart Federation website: Protect your heart (accessed November 2016): <http://www.world-heart-federation.org/heart-facts/resources/videos/about-cvd/protect-your-heart/>

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## The 1-2-3s of heart disease

Want to protect your heart health? It's all in the numbers.

### Manage your blood pressure

One of the strongest predictors of heart disease is your blood pressure. Normal blood pressure is 119/79 or below. This is read as "119 over 79." The top number is the "systolic" and the bottom number is the "diastolic." Talk to your doctor if your numbers are higher than normal.

### Watch your cholesterol

High cholesterol does not have obvious symptoms to warn you of trouble. That's why it's so important to know your numbers and ask your doctor how to improve them. There are two numbers to know when it comes to cholesterol, LDL and HDL:

- LDL is low-density lipoprotein. This is the "bad" cholesterol. Your LDL number should be lower than 100. So when you see the L think, "Keep it low."
- HDL is high-density lipoprotein. This is the "good" cholesterol. Your HDL number should be above 60. So when you see the H think, "Keep it high."

### Know your body mass index (BMI)

BMI measures body fat using a person's weight and height. You can use WebMD's BMI calculator to find your BMI.

- A BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is ideal.
- A BMI of 25 to 29.9 is overweight.
- A BMI of 30 or greater indicates obesity. Being overweight or obese raises your risk of heart problems.

### Check your blood sugar

Your blood sugar number helps you assess your risk for type 2 diabetes, which increases your risk of heart disease.

- A normal fasting blood sugar is less than 100.
- A fasting blood sugar of 100 to 125 means you are prediabetic.
- A fasting blood sugar of 126 or greater means you have diabetes.

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