

Healthy Habits

Tips and resources for living well



Getting the Right Care

Throughout the month of February we use the heart as a symbol for love, but it raises an important question-how much love are we showing our hearts? According to the CDC, cardiovascular disease-including heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure-is the number 1 killer of women and men in the United States.

Fortunately, there are many things you can do to reduce your chances of getting heart disease.

You should:

- **Know your blood pressure** and keep it under control
- **Exercise regularly;** Don't smoke
- **Get tested for diabetes** and if you have it, keep it under control
- **Know your cholesterol** and triglyceride levels and keep them under control
- **Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables;** Maintain a healthy weight

Feeling Stressed?

Your heart could be paying the price! Mental stress does more than diminish your sense of well-being; it also can increase your risk of heart disease.

Chronic stress can...

- **Raise blood cholesterol and blood pressure,** resulting in hardening of the arteries.
- **Prompt unhealthy habits** like smoking, overeating and excessive drinking- additional factors that can increase your risk.

To counteract stress...

- **Exercise.** Aim for 30 minutes of moderately intense activity, such as brisk walking, most days of the week.
- **Build-up your support system.** Supportive people can reduce your stress and help you take better care of yourself.
- **Seek help** for depression or anxiety.





Avoid Caregiver Burnout

Many caregivers push themselves too hard. This can lead to feeling "burned out".

To create a healthy balance between caring for others and yourself, our experts suggest the following:

- **Define the problem.** Set limits on your time and energy.
- **Decide on strategies.** Figure out what you can reasonably do and what resources you may need. If you decide you'll visit your mother twice a week to cook, then enlist family members to help on other days.
- **Find personal support.** For example, caregiver support groups can be helpful for sharing resources and offering encouragement.

American Heart Awareness Month Tips

for preventing heart disease!

<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>

