

cut out and save

Heart Health Checklist

Although family history can play a role in your heart health, most of the factors that impact your heart are directly affected by your habits and lifestyle choices. Making healthy eating choices, managing stress and getting daily exercise are key to keeping your heart healthy.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- Don't smoke.** If you smoke, develop a plan to quit.
- Limit alcohol.**
- Develop written plans for eating, exercise, medication and stress management.** Go over those plans with your doctor to be sure you understand them and that you are comfortable with following them.
- Find a physical activity to help you cope with stress** (walking, biking, swimming, etc.) This will help you control your weight, lower your blood pressure and cholesterol and improve your mental state.

EATING & EXERCISE

- Set a daily calorie allowance and use an **Eating & Activity Tracker** to record your calories every day.
- Take a fish oil capsule every day** (Ask your doctor first).
- Cut back on sodium, caffeine and added sugars** when possible. **Include heart healthy foods you like** such as veggies, soy foods, fruits, brown rice and fish.
- Be physically active every day.**
- Do a moderately strenuous **activity 3 times a week** (ASK YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE BEGINNING ANY EXERCISE PROGRAM).

PROTECTING YOUR HEART & YOUR LIFE

- Use relaxation techniques to **limit your stress.**
- Learn the **heart attack warning signs.**
If you think you are having symptoms GET TREATMENT IMMEDIATELY.
- Carry aspirin with you at all times (Motrin® and Tylenol® don't count).
If you are having heart attack symptoms, quickly chew an aspirin tablet and call 9-1-1.

MANAGING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

- Take your blood pressure regularly and record the results.**
- See your doctor on a regular basis.
- Take any medications** exactly as prescribed.
- Don't stop taking medications** without talking with your doctor.
- Contact your doctor if your blood pressure goes up suddenly.**

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6 EATING CHOICES THAT CAN LOWER TRIGLYCERIDES

Almost everyone has heard that high cholesterol may contribute to your risk for heart disease. But you may not know that one part of your cholesterol – high triglycerides – are one of the leading risk factors for having a heart attack and even people with normal cholesterol levels can have elevated triglycerides, putting their lives at risk. Here's a few easy ways to keep your triglyceride levels under control.

- 1. Eat smaller, more frequent meals.**
- 2. Cut down on sugary foods.** Triglyceride levels can be directly affected by your intake of sugar. Start by reducing high sugar drinks like soda, punch and juice. Other high sugar items to watch out for are candy, cookies, cakes, chocolate, sweet bread, sweet cereals, ice cream, honey jelly and jam.
- 3. Eat less fat, especially saturated fats.** Stay away from foods high in saturated fat such as butter, cheese, whole milk, sausage, fatty meats, and hydrogenated fats like coconut, palm, and cottonseed oils.
- 4. Choose the right kinds of fat such as foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids.** These can help keep triglycerides down. Examples are fish like salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines and albacore tuna. Walnuts are also a good source.
- 5. Avoid or limit alcohol.** Alcohol can increase triglycerides as it is metabolized. If you do drink, keep to one serving of alcohol per day. Have less to drink at one time – and drink less often.
- 6. Take fish oil supplements.** In one study of 11,000 heart patients, those taking a fish oil capsule once a day had a 45% reduction in sudden cardiac death!