

Love Your HEART this Month!!

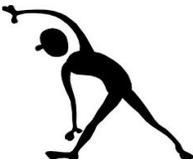
Keeping your heart healthy should be a top priority for all people. This vital organ that typically weighs between 8 and 10oz is strong enough to beat on average 100,000 times per day. However chemicals in food, pollutants from cigarette smoke and uncontrolled emotional stress can affect the heart and hinder its ability to work efficiently. Some simple lifestyle adjustments can be made to increase the health of your heart and prevent cardiovascular disease. Read through these interventions and make the decision to get started today!



Increase the Heart Healthy Fats in Your Diet: natural fats such as: avocado, almonds, salmon, and olives all contain compounds that decrease inflammation and protect the entire cardiovascular system. Try and incorporate 1-2 servings of portion controlled healthy fats into every meal.



Get Rid of the Imposters: Highly processed fats like hydrogenated oils, fractionated oils, and palm oil have been proven to increase total and LDL cholesterol AND decrease HDL cholesterol. This imbalance can lead to plaque formation in the arteries. Try your best to completely eliminate these forms from your diet.



Move Your Body: The heart is a muscle and in order for it to be strong it must be trained. Cardiovascular exercise should be added to your routine at least three times per week. Resistance training can also train the heart and promote increased blood flow and circulation to all working muscles.



Kick the Cigarettes: According to the National Cancer Institute, people who smoke are six times more likely to suffer a heart attack compared to non-smokers. Breaking the habit may be difficult but after only three years of cessation the risk of heart attack becomes that of a life long non-smoker.



Monitor Your Blood Glucose Level: Having tight control over your fasting blood glucose level (which is tested at your annual physical) will also protect the heart. Ensure that you are getting your carbohydrates from quality sources such as: whole grains, fruits, and vegetables and limit the processed grains like granola bars, crackers, chips, and sugar filled cereals.



Have a Moderate Amount of Red Wine: According to the Mayo Clinic a moderate amount (meaning 1- 5oz glass) of red wine provides the body with antioxidants that may aide in increasing HDL cholesterol which will prevent arterial damage. However, most physicians do not suggest adding red wine if you do not currently drink alcohol or if you are on specific medications. Check with your physician if you are unsure, but if you are going to consume alcohol choose a small amount of the beneficial type.

Learn to love your heart and adopt these small lifestyle changes that can benefit you and your entire cardiovascular system for years to come!!

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