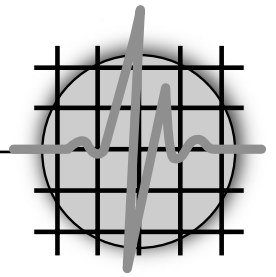




Health Tips

WHAT IS A HEART ATTACK?



Also called a myocardial infarction, or MI for short, a heart attack occurs when the blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked. This can happen when arteries that supply the heart become clogged from a buildup of fat and cholesterol cells, called plaque. When the blood flow is blocked, you can have chest pain and could have a heart attack.

It is important to learn all you can about heart disease.
Some warning signs of a heart attack are:

- **An uncomfortable heavy feeling, pressure, pain, or squeezing in your chest, neck, arm, or jaw that lasts more than a few minutes.**
- **Pain that goes to your shoulders, neck, or arm and does not go away with rest.**
- **Discomfort in your chest, along with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.**

Call 911 or your doctor if you have any of these signs!

Adapted from "What is a Heart Attack?" and "What are the Warning Signs of a Heart Attack?" 1994, 1996, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.

WHAT ARE HIGH CHOLESTEROL AND TRIGLYCERIDES?



Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in your body's cells. Your body makes enough cholesterol so that you do not need to take in any cholesterol in your diet at all. The cholesterol and saturated fat you eat may raise your blood cholesterol level.

These fats cannot dissolve in your blood, so they join up with **LDL** (Low-Density Lipoprotein, or **bad cholesterol**) and build up on the inside walls of your arteries. This can cause a blood clot and block the blood flow to your heart, and can cause a heart attack or stroke.

HDL (High-Density Lipoprotein, or **good cholesterol**) carries cholesterol away from the arteries and can help protect you from a heart attack.

Triglycerides are a fat-type substance often found in people who are obese, have high cholesterol levels, or have heart disease. Sugary foods, carbohydrates (starches) and alcohol can raise triglyceride levels.

There are three different kinds of fats in the foods we eat:

- **Saturated fats** are fats that raise cholesterol. Examples are animal fats like butter, lard, meat fat, and some plant fats, like coconut oil and palm oil.
- **Polyunsaturated fats** are found in vegetable oils and fish oils. These tend to lower cholesterol.
- **Monounsaturated fats** are found in olive oil, canola oil, and sunflower oil. In a low-fat diet, these fats may help lower cholesterol.

If you have high cholesterol, people in your family may also be at risk for it and should eat a low-fat diet and speak to their doctor about the need for testing and early prevention.

Adapted from "What are High Blood Cholesterol and Triglycerides?" 1994, 1996, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.



High cholesterol is a risk factor for heart disease and heart attack. It is important to have your cholesterol levels checked regularly and discuss them with your doctor.

Total Cholesterol Levels:

Desirable	Less than 200 mg/dl
Borderline High	200 – 239 mg/dl
High	240 mg/dl and over

HDL (" Good Cholesterol") Levels:

At Risk	Less than 35 mg/dl
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(You can help raise your HDL levels by quitting smoking, losing weight, exercising, and generally being more active.)

LDL (" Bad Cholesterol") Levels:

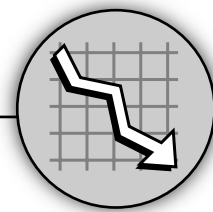
Desirable for people with heart disease	Less than 100 mg/dl
Desirable for people without heart disease	Less than 130 mg/dl
Borderline	139 – 159 mg/dl
High	160 mg/dl or higher

Triglyceride Levels:

Desirable	Less than 200 mg/dl
Borderline High	200 – 400 mg/dl
High	400 – 1,000 mg/dl
Very High	Greater than 1,000 mg/dl

People with heart disease must lower their cholesterol to prevent a heart attack. You must have your cholesterol checked at least once a year, and more often if your doctor tells you to. You need to know your cholesterol values and be able to discuss them with your doctor.

Adapted from "What Do My Cholesterol Levels Mean?" 1994, 1997, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.



You can reduce your blood cholesterol by eating healthy foods, by losing weight if you need to, and by exercising. You may also need to take medication if your doctor prescribes it for you.

A low-fat diet is helpful in lowering cholesterol levels. The American Heart Association recommends:

- 6 servings a day of breads, cereals, pasta, and starchy vegetables (corn, potatoes, green peas)
- 5 or more servings a day of vegetables and fruits
- 2-4 servings a day of dairy products (low- or no-fat milk or yogurt, low-fat cheese)
- No more than 6 cooked oz. of meat, poultry, or fish (fat trimmed and/or skin removed)
- No more than 3-4 egg yolks per week (be sure to count any egg yolks used in cooking and in prepared foods)
- Avoiding fried foods
- Chilling soups and stews and removing the hard fat from the top
- Limiting organ meats; they are very high in fat and cholesterol
- Using light or fat-free dressings and mayonnaise

How can I make my recipes healthier?

- Replace 1 cup whole milk with 1 cup skim milk plus 1 tsp. unsaturated oil
- Replace heavy cream with evaporated skim milk
- Use low-fat cottage cheese and low- or no-fat yogurt instead of sour cream, or buy low- or no-fat sour cream
- Use 4 tsp. margarine blended with 1 cup of low- or no-fat cottage cheese instead of cream cheese, or buy low- or no-fat cream cheese
- Use 1 egg white plus 2 tsp. unsaturated oil instead of an egg, or buy egg substitute

Adapted from "How Can I Lower My Cholesterol, and How Do I Change Recipes?" 1994-1996, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.



Healthy life choices will improve your overall health – and your heart health – and can help stop the progression of your heart disease.

Once you take the first step, the rest are easier. The American Heart Association recommends the following:

If you smoke, QUIT.

Improve your eating habits.

Be more active.

Take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor – especially high blood pressure medicines – to help prevent future complications.

Some healthy choices:

Quit smoking.

- No matter how long you've smoked, when you quit, you lower your risk for heart disease.
- Three years after quitting, your risk is almost the same as if you had never smoked!
- List reasons to quit and read them often – at least every day.
- Write down when you smoke and how you felt at the time.
- Find a friend to call when you need a cigarette.
- Do deep breathing exercises when you want to smoke.
- Ask your doctor to help with support and/or medications to help you quit.

Eat healthier.

- Healthier eating is important to help lower cholesterol and to give you energy.
- Ask your doctor to give you suggestions for healthy eating.

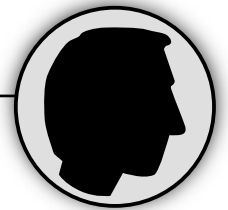
Exercise.

- Exercising and being active are important.
- Check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.
- Walking is always an easy way to get started. Start slowly and build up to 30 minutes, 5 times a week.
- Exercise reduces stress and helps you sleep.

Remember to take your medicines.

- Take your medications at the same times every day.
- Buy a pill box to help keep track of your medicines, dosages, and times.
- Put reminder notes on the medicine cabinet.

Adapted from "How Can I Make My Lifestyle Healthier?" 1994-1996, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.



According to the American Heart Association, stress is your body's response to change. Too much stress can lead to health problems. Managing your emotions and finding more satisfactory responses to stress will help protect your health.

Stress can trigger emotions like anger, fear, excitement, or helplessness. People with high stress can find it hard to sleep and often complain about tightness, aches, and pains in the neck, shoulders, jaws, and back. Stress can increase your desire to smoke, eat, drink, or even abuse drugs.

You may not even be aware that you are under stress, but over long periods of time, your body will suffer from it.

Some tips to help you cope with stress:

- Allow for relaxation every day. Take time to sit quietly 15-20 minutes a day, and think of peaceful places and things. Learn meditation, deep breathing, yoga, or some other way to cope.
- Try to learn to accept things you cannot change and prepare for your known stressors.
- Try to look for the good instead of the bad.
- Exercise or do some regular physical activity like walking or biking.
- Limit caffeine and alcohol and **DO NOT SMOKE**. Substitute your nervous habits with healthier ones like walking, gardening, or calling a friend.
- Get away from the cause of the stress and take a timeout if needed.
- Think about what upsets you and try to avoid those situations.
- Learn to say no and give yourself enough time to get things done.

Adapted from "How Can I Manage Stress?" 1994, 1996, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.



The American Heart Association defines high blood pressure as the pressure caused by the blood flowing through your arteries that is consistently above the normal range. The top number (systolic) is the pressure when the heart beats; the bottom number (diastolic) is the pressure when the heart is at rest.

The recommended range of normal is 135/85, with above 140/90 being high. High blood pressure does not usually have any warning signs, so be sure to have your blood pressure checked regularly. High blood pressure usually can't be cured, but it can be controlled.

Who is at risk for high blood pressure?

- People who have family members with high blood pressure
- People over 35
- African Americans
- People who are overweight
- People who use too much alcohol
- People who are not active
- People with high stress in their lives

The only way to know if your blood pressure is elevated is to have it checked regularly. Untreated high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure, and kidney failure.

You can help reduce your high blood pressure.

- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Eat a healthy diet that is low in fat and salt.
- Exercise and be more active.
- Limit alcohol to no more than two drinks per day.
- Learn stress reduction techniques.
- Take your medicine as your doctor prescribes (never stop treatment on your own).
- Know what your blood pressure should be, and check it regularly.

Adapted from "What is High Blood Pressure?" and "How Can I Reduce My Blood Pressure?" 1994, 1996, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.

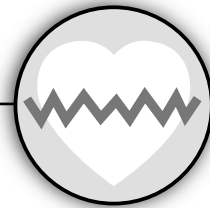


Taking medication can be difficult, especially if you take many different medicines. It is important to take your medicine the way your doctor tells you.

Take heart! It can be done, and you can follow these helpful hints from the American Heart Association:

- Take your medications at the same time every day.
- Take your medications with meals, if recommended, or with other daily events, like brushing your teeth.
- Use special pillboxes to help you keep track. Fill the box before bedtime every day.
- Ask your family and friends to help remind you.
- Keep a medication log near your medicines and note every time you take them.
- Keep stickers or reminder notes on the medicine cabinet, the refrigerator, or in the car.
- Keep track of what you can and cannot take together, including over-the-counter medicines.
- Have your prescriptions filled on time so you don't run out of medicine.
- Try to use the same pharmacy and see the same pharmacist.
- Do not take more or less of your medicines without your doctor's advice.
- Ask your doctor what to do if you miss a dose and what to do if you remember later.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any over-the-counter medications, including cold medicines, antihistamines, or herbal remedies, to be sure they won't interfere with your prescribed medicine.
- Tell your doctor about any side effects.
- Know the names and doses of what you're taking, and carry a record with you at all times.
- Keep all medications out of the reach of children.
- Take only medications that your doctor has prescribed for you.

Adapted from "How Do I Manage My Medications?" 1994, 1996, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.



4.7 million Americans are living with congestive heart failure today, and it is one of the most common reasons that people over 65 are admitted to the hospital. It takes years to develop heart failure, and while you may not currently have it, you should make lifestyle changes now to prevent it.

When you have heart failure, your heart is not pumping blood as well as it should. The heart is working harder to make up for the decrease in pumping action and can become enlarged. Heart failure gets worse if it is not treated. The blood can back up in the veins, causing fluid buildup, swelling in the legs and feet, and buildup of fluid in the lungs.

Signs of congestive heart failure.

- Shortness of breath, especially when you are lying down
- Tiredness, no energy, fatigue
- Swelling in your feet, ankles and legs, also in your hands and fingers
- Weight gain, sometimes 3 to 5 pounds overnight
- Swelling around your abdomen
- Confusion, inability to think clearly (decreased blood flow to the brain)

Heart failure can be cared for in these ways

ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT:

- Any changes to your current treatment plan.
- Medications to strengthen your heart.
- Water pills to help reduce fluid buildup.
- Surgery to restore blood flow to blocked arteries.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Decrease salt intake, because salt can cause fluid retention, which can increase swelling and shortness of breath.
- Exercise, which for most people can be an effective part of their treatment plan.
- Weigh every day and report any weight gain of three or more pounds in a day to your doctor for treatment to prevent fluid overload.
- Report symptoms to your doctor if you see increased swelling, shortness of breath, chest pain, fever, or if you can't do what you could do yesterday.

Adapted from "What is Congestive Heart Failure?" 1994, 1996, Answers by Heart, American Heart Association.



Adults, particularly those with chronic diseases like heart disease, congestive heart failure, chronic respiratory problems, or diabetes, need to get vaccinated to prevent serious complications and worsening of their chronic disease. Flu and pneumonia vaccines are important vaccines to consider as an adult with a chronic disease.

A bacterial infection (like pneumonia) or a virus (like the flu) makes it much harder to stay well, follow healthy guidelines, and take medications as prescribed. Your body may also have a more difficult time fighting the infection.

Flu Vaccine

The flu season runs from December through April. The best time to get your flu shot is between early October and mid-November. The flu is actually a group of viruses that may change from year to year, and a new flu vaccine is developed each year to keep up with those changes. It is, therefore, important to have a flu shot annually.

And remember – a flu shot will not cause you to get the flu!

Get your flu shot:
October through mid-
November

Flu season:
December
through April

REMEMBER

Getting a flu shot
will not cause you to
get the flu!

Pneumonia Vaccine

Another important immunization is the pneumonia vaccine, which can prevent pneumonia. You can have the pneumonia vaccine at the same time as your flu shot, but it is usually required only once in a lifetime. If it has been more than five years since you had a pneumonia shot and you are over 65, talk to your doctor about a revaccination.