

# HEART HEALTH MONTH

FEBRUARY 2025



Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death in the United States. This is true for both men and women. In 2020, 1 in every 5 people died from heart disease and related complications.

## FACTORS THAT PUT YOU AT RISK OF HEART DISEASE:

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obesity and being overweight
- Lack of physical activity
- Drinking too much alcohol

## HOW TO DECREASE YOUR RISK OF HEART DISEASE:

- Talk to your family to learn about your health history. Ask what chronic diseases they may have. Discuss these findings with your doctor to see how your family's medical history may affect your risk.
- Build a healthy diet into your everyday life:
  -  Increase the amount and types of fruits & vegetables. This should be about half of every meal. Fresh and frozen fruits & vegetables are the most nutritious.
  -  1/4 of each plate should be whole grains and should be eaten everyday. Examples of whole grains include oats, whole grain brown rice, whole grain wheat products, and quinoa.
  -  Choose healthy proteins. Examples include legumes, beans, nuts, fish, eggs, and white meat chicken. Any meat should be lean and not processed. 1/4 of your plate should be protein.
  -  Cut out excessive salt (sodium) by keeping processed foods to a minimum and avoiding high salt foods. If you're not on a low salt diet, try to follow the RDA (recommended dietary allowance) amount of 2300mg or less a day. Spices, herbs, lemon juice etc, can help flavor your food without using salt.
  -  Limit the amount of added sugar in your diet. Decreasing processed foods can help with this. The RDA for added sugar is less than 10% of your total calories for the day.
  -  Avoid fried foods. Try baking, broiling, grilling, or steaming to cook food instead.
  -  Drink water instead of sweet drinks. Limit alcohol consumption to 1 drink a day for women and 2 for men. 1 drink= 12oz of regular beer (4-5% alcohol), 5oz of wine, or 1 1/2 oz of distilled liquor (gin, whiskey, vodka, tequila, etc).
- Include at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week. Moving at least 30 minutes 3-5 days a week is ideal; however, you can reach that goal in smaller chunks. Even 10 minutes at a time helps. Muscle strengthening is important as well. Include it 2 days per week.
- Get tobacco/nicotine out of your life. This includes cigarettes, cigars, vaping, chew, snus, etc.
- Take all your medicine as ordered by your doctor. Don't skip doses or stop taking without talking to your doctor first. If you have questions about your meds, talk to your doctor.

## SOURCES:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm#:~:text=Heart%20Disease%20in%20the%20United%20States&text=One%20person%20dies%20every%2034,United%20States%20from%20cardiovascular%20disease.&text=About%20697%2C000%20people%20in%20the,1%20in%20every%205%20deaths.&text=Heart%20disease%20cost%20the%20United,year%20from%202017%20to%202018>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/hearthealth.html>
- <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/>
- <https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/data-reports/factsheets/ABCS.html>