



## Smoking and Your Heart

Did you know cigarette smoking can cause coronary heart disease? Smokers are 2–4 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease than non-smokers.

— Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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## Steps to a Healthy Heart

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death and disability in the United States. Eating a healthy diet and incorporating exercise into your day are two important things you can do to maintain a healthy heart.

### Increase your Fitness

- Aerobic exercise increases energy, helps control blood pressure, improves cholesterol and helps to burn extra calories. Try walking, running, cycling, swimming, climbing stairs, skiing and dancing.
- Besides aerobic activity, you need muscle strengthening exercises at least two days a week. These activities should work all major muscle groups of your body (legs, hips, back, chest, abdomen, shoulders, and arms). To gain health benefits, muscle-strengthening activities need to be done to where it's hard to do another repetition without help. A repetition is one complete movement of an activity, like lifting a weight or doing a sit-up.
- Adults need two hours and thirty minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week and muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups. 150 minutes each week sounds like a lot of time, but it's actually 30 minutes a day, five days a week.
- You can break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day, as long as you're doing your activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes at a time.

### Eat fruits and vegetables

- Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables can help to prevent cardiovascular disease. They are low



in calories, rich in dietary fiber and contain antioxidants to help strengthen your body.

### Choose whole grains

- Whole grains are a good source of fiber and contain certain nutrients that play a role in regulating blood pressure and heart health. Try switching to whole grain cereals, whole wheat bread and brown rice.

### Choose healthy fats

- Healthy fats are important because they are good for your heart, your cholesterol, and your overall health. The best sources of healthy fats are olive oil, avocados, walnuts and canola oil which contain omega-3's that are essential to health.

Remember to consult with your healthcare provider before starting any new diet or exercise program. ■

*This information is compiled from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).*

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