

## Heart Health

**Just like an engine makes a car go, your heart keeps your body running. As you grow older, some changes in the heart and blood vessels are normal, but others are caused by disease.**

Choices you might make every day can contribute to heart disease. Do you smoke? Are you overweight? Do you spend the day sitting at a desk or in front of the TV? Do you avoid doing exercise? Do you drink a lot of alcohol? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, making healthy lifestyle changes might help you prevent or delay heart disease.

**Take the following steps to keep your heart healthy:**

**Be more physically active.** Aim for 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on most or all days of the week. Every day is best. It doesn't have to be done all at once—10-minute periods will do. Start by doing activities you enjoy—brisk walking, dancing, swimming, bicycling, or playing basketball or tennis.

**If you smoke, quit.** It's never too late to get some benefit from quitting smoking.

**Follow a heart healthy diet.** Choose low-fat foods and those that are low in salt. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and foods high in fiber. Following a healthy eating plan and being physically active might help you.

**Keep a healthy weight.** Your healthcare provider can check your weight and height to learn your BMI (body mass index). A BMI of 25 or higher means you are at risk for heart disease, as well as diabetes and other health conditions. Following a healthy eating plan and being physically active might help you.



### Quick Tip

For information on heart-healthy eating plans, visit the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at NIH website at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

### VISIT

[www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life](http://www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life)

- Read more tips for adding physical activity to your day.
- Print useful tools.
- Share your exercise story.



**National Institute on Aging**

National Institutes of Health

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

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