

# Tips to Prevent Heart Disease

Did you know the term “heart disease” refers to several types of heart conditions? The most common type of heart disease is coronary artery disease, which decreases blood flow to the heart and can cause a heart attack.<sup>1</sup>

Important risk factors for heart disease are:

- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- Smoking cigarettes

There are several other medical conditions and lifestyle behaviors that can also put you at a higher risk for heart disease, including diabetes, an unhealthy diet, low physical activity, and drinking too much alcohol.

Sometimes heart disease may not be diagnosed until a person experiences signs or symptoms of a heart attack, heart failure, or an arrhythmia (a heart rhythm problem).

## **When these events happen, symptoms may include:**

- Heart attack: Chest pain or discomfort, upper back or neck pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea or vomiting, extreme fatigue, upper body discomfort, dizziness, and shortness of breath.

- Arrhythmia: Fluttering feelings in the chest (also called palpitations).
- Heart failure: Shortness of breath, fatigue, or swelling of the feet, ankles, legs, abdomen, or neck veins.

By following these tips<sup>2</sup>, you can help prevent heart disease.



## **Eat nutritious foods**

- Look for ways to make nutritious food choices like adding more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products.
- Try to reduce your salt intake, saturated fats, and added sugars. It may take a while to get used to, but small changes can have a big impact.
- Drink, drink, drink water instead of sugary drinks. If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation.
- Encourage your family to do the same!



## Try to keep a healthy weight for you!

- People of all different body sizes can be healthy, but sometimes carrying extra weight can contribute to a higher risk for heart disease.



## Get moving!

- Physical activity can help lower your blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.
- Try to do some form of physical activity that you enjoy every day (ideally 20-25 minutes of activity). Remember, dancing in the kitchen counts!
- Look for ways to increase your activity levels, like taking a walk after dinner instead of watching TV or by doing another activity you enjoy.



## Quit smoking

- If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your blood pressure and your risk of heart disease.
- Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free support. You can do it!



## Stay on top of your health

- Don't forget to get your cholesterol checked. An adult who is being treated for high cholesterol may need more frequent tests, depending on their cholesterol level and the type of treatment.
- It's also important to get your blood pressure checked regularly and even more frequently if you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure.
- If you have diabetes, remember to monitor your blood sugar carefully.

Visit [QuestDiagnostics.com](https://www.questdiagnostics.com) to schedule your diagnostic testing and stay on top of your wellness.



<sup>1</sup> About Heart Disease. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Reviewed January 13, 2021. Accessed July 9, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Prevent Heart Disease. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Reviewed April 21, 2020. Accessed July 9, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/prevention.htm>.

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