



## **Heart Disease: It Can Happen at Any Age**

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Heart disease is not something only older adults have to worry about - it is happening to younger adults more and more often. This is partly because the conditions that lead to heart disease are happening at younger ages. Half of all Americans have at least one of the top three risk factors for heart disease: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking. Other risk factors include: obesity, diabetes, physical inactivity, and unhealthy eating patterns. February is Heart Month, the perfect time to learn about your risk for heart disease and the steps you need to take now to help your heart.

**Get Active.** Try to get at least 150 minutes per week of physical activity. Even short bursts of activity can be beneficial, and all those little steps will lead to big gains in the long run!

**Eat Better.** Eat a colorful diet full of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish and nuts. Try to limit sugary foods and drinks, fatty or processed meats, and salt.

**Get to a Healthy Weight.** A healthy weight is important for your health. Learning to balance healthy eating and physical activity can help.

**Control Cholesterol.** Cholesterol comes from two sources: your body (which makes all the cholesterol you need) and food made from animals. Eating smart, adding color and moving more can all help lower your cholesterol!

**Manage Blood Pressure.** Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls. Sometimes the pressure in arteries is higher than it should be, a condition known as high blood pressure. Stress and poor diet have both been linked to high blood pressure, so it's important to be well and eat smart to help positively influence your blood pressure numbers!

**Reduce Blood Sugar.** Blood glucose (sugar) is an important fuel for your body. It comes from the food you eat, so it's important to eat smart. Cut out added sugars by checking nutrition facts labels and ingredients, limiting sweets and sugary beverages, choosing simple foods over heavily processed ones and rinsing canned fruits if they are in syrup.

**Stop Smoking.** Not smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. Smoking damages your circulatory system and increases your risk of multiple diseases, but the good news is that your lungs can begin to heal themselves as soon as you stop.

**You are never too young or too old to take care of your heart! Check out these websites to learn more:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease> and <https://www.heart.org>

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and American Heart Association