



# BROWN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Tips to Maintain a Healthy Heart

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In the US, heart disease is the leading cause of death, followed by cancer and strokes. The combination of heart-healthy eating, regular exercise, and physical activity can help reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Physical activity, a healthy diet, cholesterol control, smoking prevention, and maintaining healthy blood pressure and glucose levels are all important for a healthy heart.

1. **Physical Activity:** The benefits of regular physical activity include weight maintenance, weight loss maintenance, and improving your cardiovascular and physical fitness. Make short bursts of activity a part of your daily routine if it is difficult to fit regular exercise into your daily life. For example, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or park farther away when going to work or the store. Increasing your physical activity will help you burn more calories. During each week, aim to exercise at least 150 minutes of moderate activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week, or a combination of both.
2. **Heart Healthy Diet:** Whether you prepare your food, order food in a restaurant, or purchase a prepared meal, you can follow a heart-healthy dietary pattern. Identify packaged foods with low sodium, added sugars, and saturated fat by reviewing their nutrition facts and ingredient list. Foods that have been certified as heart-healthy by the American Heart Association can be found



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with the heart-check mark. Foods that are included in a heart-healthy diet include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grain products, healthy protein mostly plants, nuts, fish, seafood, low and nonfat dairy, and lean or unprocessed meats, and vegetable oils. It is important to minimize the amount of processed, sugary, and salty foods, and to limit alcohol intake.

- 3. Manage Cholesterol:** Your body needs to have cholesterol, but too much bad cholesterol, also known as low-density lipoprotein, can build up in your arteries, causing fatty deposits to form. Low-density lipoprotein affects 73.5 million adults. The risk of heart disease is twice as high among people with high total cholesterol numbers. Developing cardiac conditions such as arterial heart disease, heart attacks, and stroke are more likely to occur if you accumulate these fatty deposits. Exercising more, and not smoking can both prevent or improve your cholesterol levels. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats are products to eat to maintain a healthy level of cholesterol and decrease high cholesterol.
- 4. Stop Smoking, Reduce Blood Sugar, and Blood Pressure:** Living tobacco-free is a key lifestyle recommendation to reduce the risk of heart disease. Cigarette smoking promotes the production of plaques in the blood vessels. Cigarette smokes contain chemicals that cause the blood to thicken and clot inside veins and arteries. Maintaining blood pressure and blood sugar levels is important regarding heart health. The arteries and blood vessels that control your heart might be harmed by high blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

Improving your heart health will increase your overall quality of life. Check out these websites to find out more info on how: <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition->



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[basics/aha-diet-and-lifestyle-recommendations](#) and <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-disease/in-depth/heart-healthy-diet/art-20047702>

Sources: American Heart Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Northwestern Medicine, Mayo Clinic Foundation, and WebMD.