

Healthy workplace

Your monthly Anthem wellness newsletter



5 Ways to a Happy Healthy Heart!



Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of both men and women, but research shows that you can protect your heart. Here's how:

Manage your blood pressure

One of the strongest predictors of heart disease is your blood pressure. Normal blood pressure is 119/79 or below. This is read as "119 over 79." The top number is the "systolic" and the bottom number is the "diastolic." Talk to your doctor if your numbers are higher than normal.

Watch your cholesterol

High cholesterol does not have obvious symptoms to warn you of trouble. That's why it's so important to know your numbers and ask your doctor how to improve them. There are two numbers to know when it comes to cholesterol, LDL and HDL:

- LDL is low-density lipoprotein. This is the "bad" cholesterol. Your LDL number should be lower than 100. So when you see the L think, "Keep it low."
- HDL is high-density lipoprotein. This is the "good" cholesterol. Your HDL number should be above 60. So when you see the H think, "Keep it high."

Know your body mass index (BMI)

BMI measures body fat using a person's weight and height. You can use WebMD's BMI calculator to find your BMI.

- A BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is ideal.

- A BMI of 25 to 29.9 is overweight.
- A BMI of 30 to 39 indicates obesity.
- A BMI of 40 or more indicates morbid obesity. This increases a person's risk of death from any cause by 50% to 150%, according to The Cleveland Clinic.

Check your blood sugar

Your blood sugar number helps you assess your risk for type 2 diabetes.

- A normal fasting blood sugar is less than 100.
- A fasting blood sugar of 100 to 125 means you are prediabetic.
- A fasting blood sugar of 126 or greater means you have diabetes.

Exercise

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends aerobic exercise three to five days a week for 30 to 45 minutes.

3 Risk Factors you can Change to Take Care of your Heart

Heart disease affects more than 81 million Americans and is the No. 1 killer of both women and men.¹

While you can't control your family history, gender and age, you can control and change these risk factors:

1. **Your weight.** Try to squeeze in at least 30 minutes of exercise five times a week. Plus, fill

your plate with healthy choices to help lower your heart disease risk factors and maintain a healthy weight.

2. **Your numbers.** If you have high cholesterol and high blood pressure, you're also at a higher risk for heart disease. You can help lower both by eating foods rich in whole grains, fruits, veggies and low-fat dairy products. Talk to your doctor to see what will work best for you.
3. **Smoking.** If you smoke, kick the habit. Within one year of quitting smoking, your risk for heart disease is reduced by half.²

Healthy hint: Dealing with a chronic condition like heart disease? If you're an Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield member, check out the ConditionCare program. It will provide you with the tools and expert guidance you need to help you live your best life — at no extra cost. To learn more, watch this [video](#)



Excess Added Sugar Intake Linked to Heart Disease

Added sugars and processed fructose, in particular, is a primary driver of metabolic dysfunction. Refined fructose is actually broken down very much like alcohol, damaging your liver and causing mitochondrial and metabolic dysfunction in the same way as ethanol and other toxins.

It also causes more severe metabolic dysfunction because it's more readily processed into fat than any other sugar. A recent meta-review published in the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* found that once you reach 18 percent (**150 calories for men, 100 calories for women**) of your daily calories from added sugar, there's a two-fold increase in metabolic harm that promotes pre-diabetes and diabetes.⁴

A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* also concluded "most US adults consume more added sugar than is recommended for a healthy diet," and there's "a

significant relationship between added sugar consumption and increased risk for cardiovascular disease mortality."

The 15-year long study, which included data for 31,000 Americans, found that those who consumed 25 percent or more of their daily calories as sugar were more than twice as likely to die from heart disease as those who got less than 10 percent of their calories from sugar.

On the whole, the odds of dying from heart disease rose in tandem with the percentage of added sugar in the diet regardless of the age, sex, physical activity level, and body-mass index.

A 2014 study came to very similar results. Here, those who consumed the most sugar — about 25 percent of their daily calories — were twice as likely to die from heart disease as those who limited their sugar intake to 7 percent of their total calories.

Article by-Dr.Mercola:

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2015/05/06/sugary-drinks-heart-disease-risk.aspx>



Let's Put this in Perspective!

One 12oz can of coke contains 140 calories from sugar, while a regular sized snickers bar contains 120 calories from sugar. You already exceeded your daily recommended intake of added sugar!



Naturally Sugars vs Added Sugars?

According to the American Heart Association, there are two types of sugars in American diets: naturally occurring sugars and added sugars.

- **Naturally occurring sugars** are found *naturally* in foods such as fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose).
- **Added sugars** include *any* sugars or caloric sweeteners that are *added* to foods or beverages during processing or preparation (such as putting sugar in your coffee or adding sugar to your cereal). Added sugars (or added sweeteners) can include natural sugars such as white sugar, brown sugar and honey as well as other caloric sweeteners that are chemically manufactured (such as high fructose corn syrup).

You can use sugars to help enhance your diet. Adding a **limited** amount of sugar to improve the taste of foods (especially for children) that provide important nutrients, such as whole-grain cereal, low-fat milk or yogurt, is better than eating nutrient-poor, highly sweetened foods

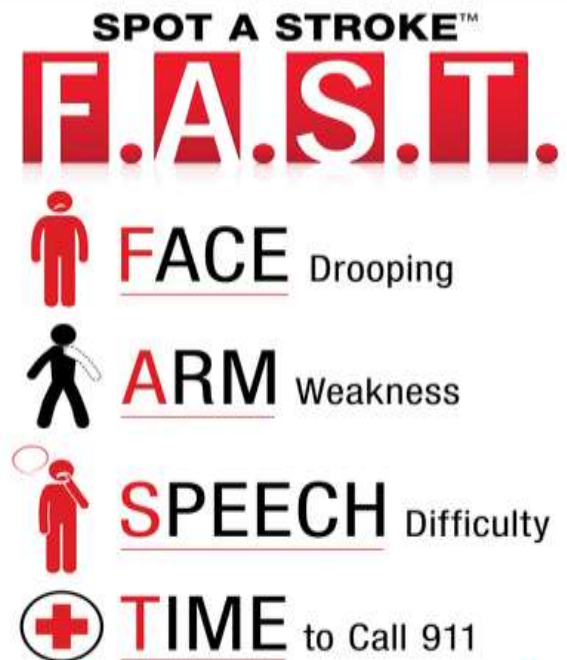
AHA: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Sugar-101_UCM_306024_Article.jsp#WH-1.4DifOUk

Names for added sugars on labels include:

- Brown sugar
- Corn sweetener
- Corn syrup
- Fruit juice concentrate
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Invert sugar
- Malt sugar
- Molasses
- Raw sugar
- Sugar
- Sugar molecules ending in "ose"
(dextrose, fructose, glucose, lactose, maltose, sucrose)
- Syrup



How to Tell if Someone is Having a Stroke



StrokeAssociation.org



How Mindfulness Helps Your Health



According to a new study published in the *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine* found a significant association between something called dispositional mindfulness and improved scores on four of the seven indicators of cardiovascular health. According to the American Heart Association, those indicators relate to blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, height, weight, and waist circumference, plus eating and exercise habits. This is the first study to ever consider these factors in regards to heart health according to Medical Daily.

Here's how to be mindful when you have a few minutes to yourself and don't need to concentrate on a more pressing task (like driving):

First, pause and focus on your body. Notice what you see and hear. Also, check what you smell, taste, and feel. Don't label these sensations as good or bad. Just let them go.

Then narrow your focus. What do feel in your body? Notice subtle sensations like an itch or tingling. Give each part of your body a moment of your full attention. Start with your head and move to your toes.

Next, be more intent on your breath. Where in your body do you feel it most? Rest your attention there.

Ask yourself, "How am I in this moment?" Acknowledge your thoughts and emotions. Spend a few moments with them, being with things as they are. Allow your feelings to be present without judgment.

When your mind wanders, (and it will), simply return to your breath. There's no need to beat yourself up for losing focus.

Article: WebMD, Medical Daily

Delicious Foods That Are Heart Healthy



If you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or a history of heart problems, you have a higher risk of heart attack and stroke. You can lower your risk by making this small change: At each meal, choose foods that are good for your heart.

Most diets are based on foods you shouldn't eat. Instead, take a positive approach and focus on foods that are good for you.

Eat more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. The fiber in these foods helps lower "bad" LDL cholesterol. Put these on your plate with every meal to reach these daily amounts: At least 5 cups of fruits and vegetables and three 1-ounce servings of whole grains a day.

Eat more beans, legumes (like lentils), seeds, and nuts. Your weekly target: 4 servings of either nuts, seeds, or legumes such as black beans, chickpeas, or lentils.

Put healthier fats to work for you. Favor unsaturated fats, such as canola, olive, and peanut oils. These oils are less likely than butter or lard to clog your arteries.

Eat fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids, including albacore tuna, salmon, and sardines. Omega-3s seem to lower triglycerides, fight plaque in your arteries, lower blood pressure, and reduce your risk of abnormal heart rhythms.

Eat lean protein. Make beans, nuts, fish, and chicken your mainstays, and keep portions in check. The American Heart Association suggests you eat at least two 3.5-ounce servings of fish a week. Some cuts of meat have more fat than others, so look for leaner choices. If you're craving some type of processed meat -- bacon, deli meats, hot dogs, sausage, chicken nuggets, or jerky -- limit those, too.

Feed your body regularly. When you skip a meal, you're more likely to overeat later. For some people, eating 5 to 6 mini-meals works best to limit calories, help control blood sugars, and regulate metabolism. For others, 3 meals a day works better, since extra meals can trigger overeating. See which approach works for you.

Experiment with new flavors. Try using dried herbs and spices instead of salt, which can drive up your blood pressure. For chicken, try using rosemary, garlic, or sage. For fish, try dill or tarragon. Vinegars are another way to liven up ho-hum food.

Celebrate each pound you lose. Small steps add up. Dropping even 5 or 10 pounds -- even if you're still technically overweight afterward -- will cut your risk of having a heart attack or stroke by lowering your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.

As important as your diet is, you'll also do your heart a favor by doing these things:

Exercise. Be as active as possible. It strengthens your heart, improves blood flow, raises "good HDL cholesterol, and helps control blood sugar and body weight.

If you smoke, quit. No matter how many years you've been smoking, know this: Research shows that quitting works as well -- if not better -- than just about any heart drug available. Quitting now will lower your risk of death from heart disease by 33%.

Article: WebMD: <http://www.webmd.com/cholesterol-management/guide/heart-healthy-diet?print=true>

Shrimp Picatta with Zucchini Noodles



Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 5-6 medium zucchini (2¼-2½ pounds), trimmed
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound raw shrimp (21-25 count), peeled and deveined, tails left on if desired
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

- ⅓ cup white wine
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons capers, rinsed
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Instructions

1. Using a spiral vegetable slicer, or a vegetable peeler, cut zucchini lengthwise into long, thin strands or strips. Stop when you reach the seeds in the middle (seeds make the noodles fall apart). Place the zucchini "noodles" in a colander and toss with salt. Let drain for 15 to 30 minutes, and then gently squeeze to remove any excess water.
2. Meanwhile, heat butter and 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add shrimp and cook, stirring, for 1 minute.
3. Whisk broth and cornstarch in a small bowl. Add to the shrimp along with wine, lemon juice and capers. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the shrimp is just cooked through, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the zucchini noodles and gently toss until hot, about 3 minutes. Serve the shrimp and sauce over the zucchini noodles, sprinkled with parsley.

Nutrition

Serving size: 1 cup zucchini & about ¾ cup sauce
Per serving: 280 calories; 15.0 g fat(5.0 g sat); 3.0 g fiber; 13.0 g carbohydrates; 24.0 g protein; 174 mg cholesterol; 6.0 g sugars; 0.0 g added sugars; 835.0 IU vitamin A; 53.0 mg vitamin C; 117.0 mg calcium; 2.0 mg iron; 516 mg sodium; 1002.0 mg potassium

Check out EatingWell.com for more information!

