

Keeping Your Heart Healthy

Lake County Factsheet #FCSN2002

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What is heart disease?

Heart Disease is anything that changes how the heart functions normally. Coronary artery disease is the most common. Blood flow can change due to thick plaque buildup causing blockages and can result in a heart attack or stroke.

What are the risk factors?

Risk	Reason
High Blood Pressure	Increases the work of the heart and blood vessels and makes them work harder, causing damage to the arteries.
High Cholesterol	Fat buildup does not allow your blood to flow as freely and can cause blockages.
Smoking	Lowers your good cholesterol by raising unhealthy fat in your blood. Cells are damaged and the arteries becomes narrowed.
Diabetes	Your body is not producing insulin or enough that is needed to convert foods to energy, and sugar builds up in the blood.
Obesity	Excess weight makes your heart work harder to function normally by elevating blood pressure, causing inflammation, and may lead to heart failure.
Unhealthy Eating	Choosing foods higher in saturated fat can increase your cholesterol. Food's high in sodium can increase your blood pressure causing more stress on your heart.
Lack of Physical Activity	May affect the strength of your bones, achieving a healthy weight, preventing and managing chronic diseases and how much quality sleep you get each night.
Lack of Sleep	Raises your blood pressure, causes weight gain and may cause sugar to build up in your blood.

What are heart healthy eating choices I can make?

The DASH Diet, which is the Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension is one eating plan that can be followed. It has a focus on fruits, vegetables and whole grains. This approach limits saturated fats, sodium, added sugars, and alcohol.

Each time you build your plate for a meal or snack choose a variety of food groups. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables and choose a variety of colors for health benefits. Whole grains foods such as whole-wheat bread, brown rice, oatmeal quinoa, bulger and barley will provide energy, important vitamins and minerals, and fiber to keep your digestive system on track. When grocery shopping choose from the perimeter of the store. Packaged and canned are higher in added sugars and sodium than fresh foods. For any of these foods you are choosing, try to compare nutrition facts labels to make a healthier choice. Natural sugar will be found in fruit and milk, added sugars are added to some packaged foods during processing. Check out the ingredient list under the nutrition facts label and look for sugar or anything that ends in “ose”. Ingredients are listed by weight, the first 3-5 ingredients is what’s mostly found in food. Flavor fresh foods with fresh herbs and spices in place of the saltshaker, be creative in your flavor combinations. When cooking bake, broil, roast, sauté, steam or grill, and choose healthier oils like canola or olive; they are healthier for your heart than tropical oils such as palm and coconut oil. Choose protein that has less than 10g of total fat, and less than 4.5g of saturated fat, and trim off any fat before cooking and remove any skin before eating.

How much physical activity do I need?

Population	Recommendation
Children & Adolescents	60 minutes daily of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.
Adults	150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75-150 minutes of vigorous-intensity or combination each week.

*Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Rates of intensity can be measured by a talk test. If you are doing a moderate activity you can talk throughout activity but can’t sing. Vigorous activity will only allow you to say a few words before taking a break for a breath. Learn more at:

https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf

Additional Resources:

Heart Disease: <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/>

Healthy Diet Pattern: <https://www.heart.org/-/media/files/health-topics/answers-by-heart/how-do-i-follow-a-healthy-diet.pdf>

Dash Diet: https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/dash_brief.pdf