



Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Heart

Washington Imaging Services believes that a healthy lifestyle and ongoing awareness of your heart health is the best preventive medicine. Here are some of the top Healthy Heart tips from the American Heart Association to help you achieve good health:

Don't smoke.

Don't start smoking. If you are a smoker, stop. Long-term smokers can cut their risk of heart attack to equal that of non-smokers within just two short years of stopping.

Improve your eating habits.

Ask your physician, nurse or licensed nutritionist to create a nutritional program that meets your needs. At minimum, you should avoid fatty foods, load up on fruits and vegetables and limit your alcoholic intake.

Get physical.

Physical activity reduces your risk of a heart attack and makes your heart stronger. A more active lifestyle can control your weight and blood pressure, or help you relax and improve your mood. Be sure to check with your physician before starting an exercise program.

Know your family health history.

If your father or mother died of a heart attack or suffered from heart disease, you are more likely to be at risk and should be more aware of how to control risk factors.

Know your body.

What is your blood pressure? What is your cholesterol level? Make sure these indicators are within the normal limits. If not, take the appropriate action to get these within healthier levels.

Don't ignore possible symptoms.

It could just be heartburn or it could be "the big one." Don't take it for granted that you know what that unexplained chest pain is all about. This is especially true for women who don't present the classic symptoms of heart disease found among men. Consult your physician and tell him/her about the nature of all your symptoms.

Check for diabetes.

Increased blood sugar can be a factor in the onset of heart disease, especially if you are 50-100 pounds overweight. Consult your physician.



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Cardiac Risk Factors (continued)

Cardiac Risk Factors*

- Age
- Gender
- Family history
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Lack of exercise
- Stress
- Hormonal status
- Alcohol consumption

* American Heart Association 2007



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