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Healthy Heart Tips

Considering that heart disease is the #1 cause of death in the United States* and stroke is the #3 cause of death*, it is important to reduce risk factors, know the warning signs, and know how to respond quickly and properly if warning signs occur.

Better lifestyle habits can help reduce the risk for heart attack. Learn what you can do to help prevent heart disease and stroke.

- **Exercise & fitness.** Swimming, cycling, jogging, skiing, dancing, walking, and dozens of other activities can help your heart. Whether it is included in a structured exercise program or just part of your daily routine, all physical activity adds up to a healthier heart.
- **You are what you eat.** Better food habits can help to reduce the risk for heart attack. A healthful eating plan means choosing the right foods to eat and preparing foods in a healthy way (omitting high calorie creams, butters, and sugars).
- **Managing weight.** Maintaining a healthy weight is probably the best thing one can do to keep their heart and circulatory systems working properly. Combine exercise and sensible nutrition to stay within the recommended weight for your age, height, and gender.
- **Know your risk factor numbers.** Talk to your physician about getting the following screenings: blood pressure, body composition, and cholesterol. Elevated blood pressure and cholesterol number exponentially increase the risk of developing heart disease.
- **Become smoke free.** The American Heart Association reports that a smoker's risk for developing coronary artery disease is 2-4 times that of nonsmokers. Smoking increases risk for heart disease by increasing blood pressure, decreasing exercise tolerance, and increasing the tendency for blood to clot.
- **Manage diabetes.** Diabetics are twice as likely as non-diabetics to have heart disease. Managing diabetes through sensible eating and adequate physical activity can greatly reduce the risk of developing disease.

*For more information about what you can do to help fight heart disease and for a list of warning signs of heart disease go to: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200000>

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