



# Heart health



## RISK FACTORS

Some factors make people more likely to have coronary heart disease. The more risk factors you have, the more you are at risk.

### Risk Factors You Can't Change

- You have had a heart attack or stroke.
- Being male 45 years+ or female 55 years+
- Heart disease in a father or brother before age 55; in a mother or sister before age 65
- African Americans and American Indians have a higher risk than Caucasians.

### Risk Factors You Can Control

- Cigarette smoking. Secondhand smoke.
- Blood pressure  $\geq$  130/80 mm Hg or you take medicine to lower high blood pressure
- Blood levels for LDL (bad) cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, and/or triglycerides
- Diabetes
- Overweight. Lack of exercise. Unhealthy diet.
- Stress. Lack of quality sleep.
- Other artery diseases (abdominal aortic aneurysm, carotid artery disease, peripheral artery disease)
- Metabolic syndrome. This is having 3 or more of these problems:
  - Waist size  $>$  40 inches for men;  $>$  35 inches for women
  - Blood pressure  $\geq$  130 mm Hg systolic and/or  $\geq$  80 mm Hg diastolic
  - Fasting blood sugar  $\geq$  100 mg/dL
  - Fasting triglycerides  $\geq$  150 mg/dL
  - HDL-cholesterol  $<$  40 mg/dL for men;  $<$  50 mg/dL for women

## EXERCISE & MOVEMENT

The heart is a muscle and exercise makes it stronger.

Exercise also does these things:

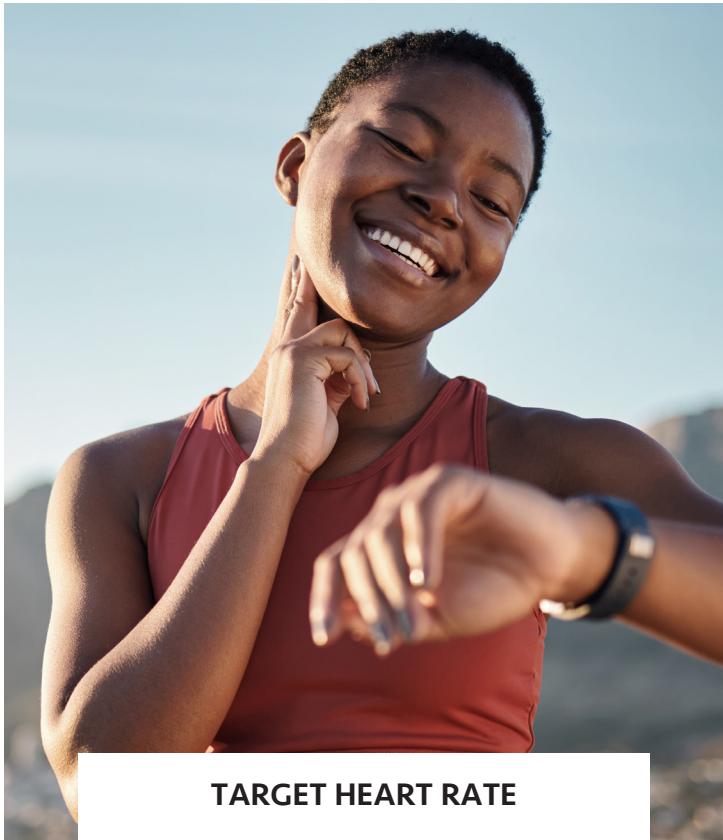
- It helps more blood get to the heart and more oxygen get to the lungs.
- It lowers the chance of blood clots in the arteries.
- It helps lower blood pressure.
- It lowers stress.

Try to do an aerobic activity on most days or 150 minutes per week. Aerobic exercises include: walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, fitness classes, jumping rope, and indoor/outdoor housework.

Muscle-strengthening exercises also benefit your heart, such as pushups, lifting weights, climbing stairs, and digging in the garden.

### Exercise tips:

- Start out slowly.
- Warm up and cool down.
- Wait at least 2 hours after you eat to do heavy exercise.
- Vary the exercises you do, so you won't get bored.
- Talk to your doctor before you start to exercise if:
  - You have been inactive for a long time.
  - You are overweight.
  - You are over 35 years old.
  - You have any medical problems.



## TARGET HEART RATE

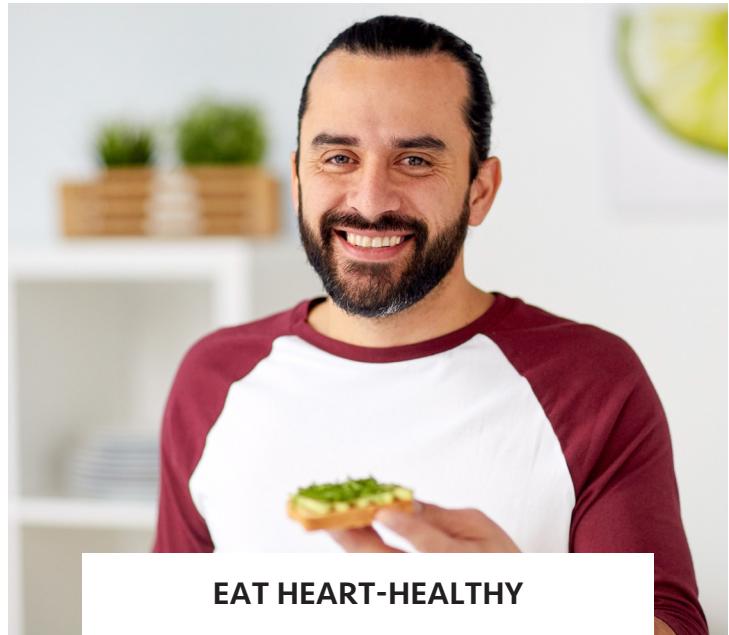
This is 64-76% of your maximum heart rate for moderate-intensity activity. If you reach your target heart rate during the aerobic part of your workout, your pace is good.

To find out if you reach your target heart rate, check your pulse 10 minutes after you start your workout.

- Place your fingers (not your thumbs) on one side of your neck below your jawbone. Or, check it on the inside of your wrist.
- Count the number of tiny beats you feel in 10 seconds.
- Find the line with your age (or the closest one to it) in the chart.

| Target Heart Rate Zone (Approximate Range) |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Age  | Beats Per 10 Seconds |
| 20   | 21 to 25             |
| 25   | 21 to 25             |
| 30   | 20 to 24             |
| 35   | 20 to 23             |
| 40   | 19 to 23             |
| 45   | 19 to 22             |
| 50   | 18 to 22             |
| 55   | 18 to 21             |
| 60   | 17 to 21             |
| 65+  | 17 to 20             |

**Note:** Check with your doctor before you use this target heart rate range. Your range may need to be lower for medical reasons.



## EAT HEART-HEALTHY

- Choose a diet rich in plant-based foods. These include:
  - Vegetables without added salt or fat
  - Fruits without added sugars
  - Legumes (beans, peas and lentils, tofu)
  - Whole grain bread, cereal and pasta
  - Nuts and seeds
- Focus on eating whole grains and getting dietary fiber.
  - Oats, oat bran, kidney and other beans, lentils, apples, and carrots have a type of fiber that helps lower cholesterol.
  - Bran (from wheat, rice, and rye), nuts, seeds, fruits, and vegetables have another type of fiber. This helps prevent constipation.
  - Aim for 28-34 g of dietary fiber if you are a man; 22-28 g a day if you are a woman.
- Limit added sugar, such as sweetened drinks, cookies, pie, candy, jam, etc.
- Choose fresh over processed foods.
- Opt for items that are low in sodium or are labeled, “no added salt” or “low-sodium.”
- Limit red meats and processed meats.
- Aim to have no trans fats. These are in hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils. Examples are stick margarine, vegetable shortening and some processed foods. Read the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels. Choose items with zero grams of trans fat per serving.
- Limit saturated fats, such as meat fat, coconut and palm oils, and full-fat dairy foods.
- Choose oils and foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, such as nuts, seeds, salmon, and avocados.



## MANAGE STRESS

Stress makes the heart work harder, raises blood pressure and contributes to other risk factors. Plus, people who respond to stress in a hostile, angry way may suffer more heart attacks.

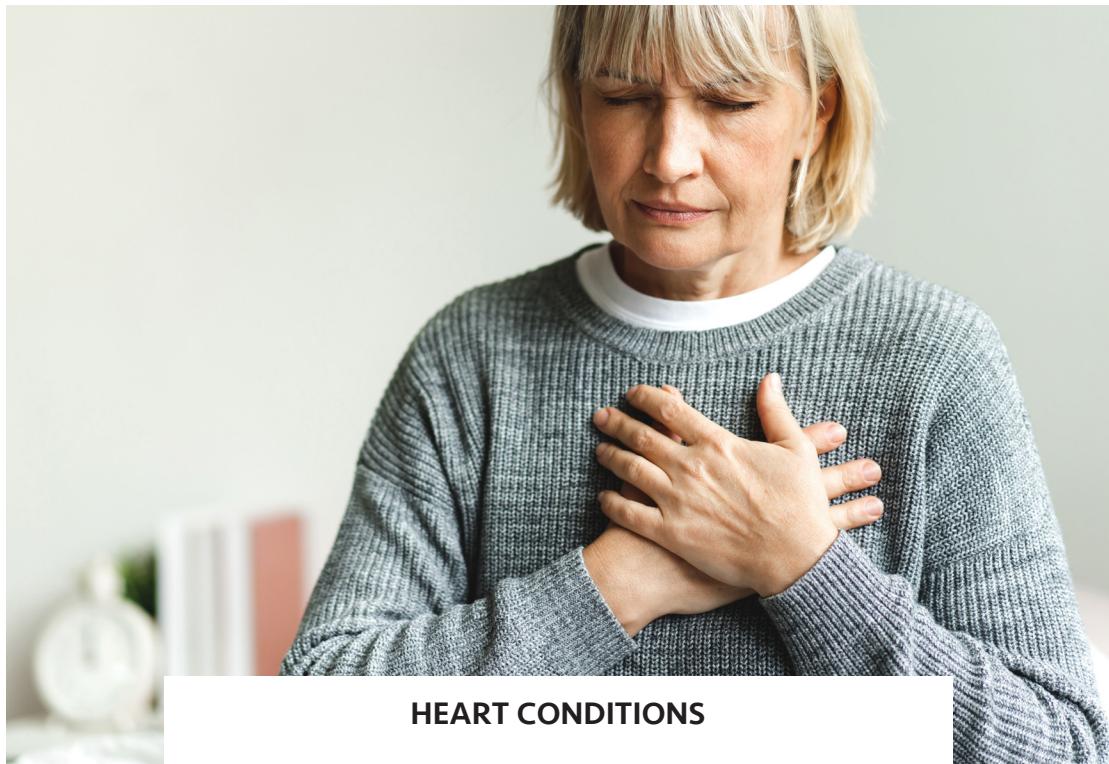
### Tips for Managing Stress

- Learn ways to relax, like breathing exercises, meditation, and guided relaxation techniques.
- Balance work and play.
- Disrupt negative thinking.
- Express your feelings.
- Stay connected with friends and family for support.
- Seek help from a professional counselor.



## OTHER HEART HEALTH TIPS

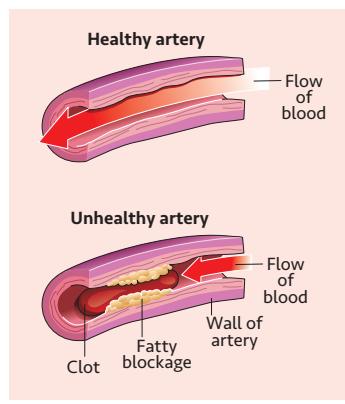
- Get regular medical checkups. Get your blood pressure checked at each office visit or as often as your doctor recommends. Get your blood cholesterol tested (yearly if you have, or are at risk for, heart disease or diabetes, or recommended by your doctor).
- Don't smoke. If you smoke, keep trying to quit.
- Aim for a healthy body weight.
- Ask your doctor about taking a low dose of aspirin (e.g., 1 baby aspirin) daily.
- If you have diabetes, follow your plan and target goals for blood glucose levels.
- Aim for 7-9 hours of good-quality sleep a day. Take steps to improve your sleep habits, such as maintain a regular sleep schedule, do something relaxing before bed, and avoid caffeine 6-8 hours before bedtime.
- Take medicines as prescribed.
- If you drink alcohol, limit how much you drink to:
  - 2 drinks a day for men
  - 1 drink a day for women and persons over age 65
  - One drink = 5 oz. wine or 12 oz. beer or 1-1/2 oz. 80 proof liquor, such as whiskey, gin and vodka



## HEART CONDITIONS

### Coronary Artery Disease

Heart disease is a common term for coronary artery disease (CAD). It is the leading cause of death in the U.S. for both men and women. With heart disease, arteries that supply blood to the heart become clogged with deposits called plaque. Cholesterol is part of the plaque. Over time, the buildup of plaque restricts blood flow to the heart. This can cause the problems that follow.



### Heart Failure (HF)

The heart “fails” to supply enough blood and oxygen for the body’s needs. This develops over time. It becomes a chronic problem. Symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Feeling very tired or weak
- Swelling in the lower legs, ankles and feet
- Shoes can feel too tight all of a sudden.

- Rapid weight gain
- Dry cough or one with pink, frothy mucus
- Fast heartbeat
- Lack of appetite or nausea

### Heart Attack

The heart doesn’t get enough blood for a period of time. Part or all of the heart muscle dies. A heart attack can occur with heavy activity. It can occur at rest or during sleep, too.

### Angina

The heart muscle does not get enough blood and oxygen needed for a given level of work. Symptoms include:

- Pain, discomfort or a squeezing pressure in the chest
- Aching in a tooth, an arm, a jaw or in the neck

Symptoms may come when you get angry or excited. They are more likely to come when you exert yourself (climb a hill, run to catch a bus, etc.). They usually go away with rest and/or nitroglycerin. This is medicine a doctor prescribes.

**{Note:** Angina symptoms can also be signs of a heart attack. A heart attack damages the heart muscle. Angina does not.}

## HEART ATTACK WARNING SIGNS

For any heart attack warning sign, call 9-1-1.



### Common Heart Attack Warning Signs

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts for more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back. The discomfort feels like pressure, fullness, squeezing, or pain.
- Discomfort or pain in one or both arms or in the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath often with chest discomfort but can occur without chest pain. Other symptoms: breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, vomiting, anxiety, rapid or irregular heart beat, and feeling unusually tired.

### Signs More Likely to Occur in Women

The most common symptom is still chest pain or discomfort. But women are more likely to have some of the other warning signs listed, such as anxiety; shortness of breath; nausea; vomiting; upset stomach; pain in the shoulder, back or arm; and unusual tiredness.