



HEART HEALTH

6 steps to a healthier heart



It's never too late to start living a healthier life. A few simple steps can put you on the path to a younger heart age and better overall health. Consider these tips to get started. By adopting these heart-healthy habits, you can reduce your heart age. You'll have a lower risk of heart attack, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and other health problems.

1. **If you smoke, quit.** Quitting can be hard and often requires help and support. Talk with your doctor or go online to find a number of free resources to help you.

2. **See your doctor to get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked.** Uncontrolled high blood pressure and high cholesterol increase your risk of heart attack and stroke. You won't know if you're at risk until you get tested because there are no symptoms. Take medicines as your doctor advises to help manage these risk factors.
3. **Get regular exercise.** Walking, biking, and swimming are great choices. Try to exercise for 30 minutes, five days a week.

4. **Focus on a heart-healthy diet.** This includes lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein like chicken and fish. Minimize foods like fried foods, fast food, and sugary desserts and drinks.
5. **Aim for a healthy weight.** Calculate your BMI online, or talk with your doctor. Losing just 5 to 10 pounds has heart benefits.
6. **Manage stress and get enough good-quality sleep.** Find ways to relax and get 7-9 hours of sleep a day.