

SMART Health

FEBRUARY 2019

Checklist: Your Heart's Must-Haves

What are the key elements that can help protect your heart? Check the following habits that you typically observe or hope to develop for heart health. Then start watching your progress.

- ♥ **Waistline:** I keep my waist circumference below 35 inches (for women) or below 40 inches (for men). Excess belly fat raises heart disease risk.
- ♥ **Power moves:** I stay physically active and get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise weekly. Examples: routine brisk walks, a dance class or cardio machine workouts.
- ♥ **Numbers game:** I know my blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and triglyceride levels through regular checks by my health care provider. Maintaining optimal levels is critical to heart health.
- ♥ **Positive food:** I enjoy a diet rich in fresh produce, whole grains and lean protein sources (fish, beans, lean meats) to help fight arterial disease and unwanted weight gain.
- ♥ **I don't smoke.** Smoking significantly raises the risk of heart disease and diabetes by damaging the blood vessels and raising blood pressure and heart rate.
- ♥ **Yes for nutrition:** I rarely eat refined grains or processed foods. These products (e.g., low-fiber, high-sugar foods and preserved meats) remove many healthful components in the original food sources.
- ♥ **I laugh a lot.** It feels good and relieves stress and depression. Laughter helps lower stress hormones and artery inflammation and increase HDL (good) cholesterol, says the American Heart Association.



It's never too late to be heart smart for you and your family.

BEST bits



■ **February 1 is Wear Red Day** honoring women's heart health.

Heart disease kills more women than all forms of cancer combined. Most women who die suddenly from heart disease will have no prior symptoms. But 80% of cardiac events may be prevented with health education and lifestyle changes to manage your vital signs.

■ **Pain reliever reminder:** Taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and elevated blood pressure. The risk increases in those with heart disease and when higher doses are taken long term. Many people use NSAIDs, including ibuprofen and naproxen, to help reduce pain and inflammation. **Take the lowest effective dose, and limit the time you use them.** Check with your health care provider to learn more.

■ **Music to your heart?** Listening to music can be stimulating and healthful as it relaxes your arteries, improving blood vessel function, heart rate and blood pressure levels. It can ease anxiety in heart attack survivors and enhance recovery from stroke. Music therapy is most beneficial when you listen to tunes you love, sing along or play an instrument.

“I attribute my success to this: I never gave or took any excuse.”

— Florence Nightingale

TIP of the MONTH

Go COMPOST

Food scraps and yard waste account for 30% of our garbage, but we can compost it instead. Consider composting at home. Start with a bin (you can buy or make one). Then research the basics of layering greens (high nitrogen), such as vegetable scraps and coffee grounds, and browns (high carbon), such as dry leaves, sawdust and wood chips, in the bin. **The benefits?** Reduce food waste and use the compost as mulch in your garden.



“Believe in yourself, take on your challenges, dig deep within yourself to conquer fears. Never let anyone bring you down. You got to keep going.”

— Chantal Sutherland

eating smart

Slash the Salt

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

When you hear the words **salt** and **sodium**, you may immediately think about the salt shaker on your table. Maybe you use it before your meal to enhance the flavor of your food, or perhaps you add a dash while cooking. It may surprise you to learn that just 11% of your sodium intake comes from the salt you cook with or add at the table.

Most of the sodium Americans consume (71%) comes from ultra-processed, packaged and restaurant food. Salt is in pizza, bread, burgers, deli meat, chips, pretzels, pickles and condiments, to name a few. These foods are high in sodium because it's used in so many ways — to prevent spoilage, prohibit growth of pathogens, improve appearance and enhance flavor or texture.

If you've been told to cut back on salt for health reasons, such as salt-sensitive hypertension or kidney disease, it's not just about avoiding the salt shaker. Your best bet is to eat fewer ultra-processed foods.

You don't need to banish salt from your diet, since at least 1,500 mg sodium per day is required for normal body functioning. The trouble is, many people get too much (about 3,400 mg per day).



You can still cook with salt, but try to cut back on using very salty sauces and dressings, such as soy or barbecue sauce. Instead, boost flavor with citrus fruits, such as lemon or lime; herbs, such as basil, oregano and rosemary; spices, such as cumin, cinnamon and coriander; or aromatics, including garlic, onion and ginger.

Spiced Lentil and Carrot Soup

EASY recipe

1 tbsp olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
1 tsp each dried cumin, turmeric and coriander
½ tsp salt
1 cup red lentils, rinsed
4 cups water
½ cup chopped fresh parsley
Lemon wedges

Heat oil in pot set over medium. **Add** onion and garlic. **Sauté** about 4 minutes, or until softened. **Add** carrots, and sauté 2 minutes. **Add** spices, salt and lentils, and stir to combine. **Add** water, stir, and simmer 25 minutes, or until carrots and lentils are softened. **Top** with parsley and a squeeze of lemon.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving:

154 calories | 11g protein | 4g total fat | 0.5g saturated fat | 2.5g mono fat
1g poly fat | 30g carbohydrate | 4g sugar | 8g fiber | 302mg sodium

Giving Feedback Positively

When presenting feedback at work, it pays to deliver your message positively and constructively. Managing difficult conversations is an important skill we all need.

Providing negative feedback is hard because we can't guess how someone will react to it.

Will the recipient get upset, defensive, disagree or accept it gracefully? The best approach is to be honest and open, using some basic techniques:

① **Prepare.** Study your observations of the other person before expressing them. Provide factual and complete feedback. Define possible solutions in advance.

② **Allow for a pause.** Once stated, give the person a few minutes to consider the message. Discuss what you want to see more of and less of.

③ **Focus on potential benefits.** State clearly how your feedback is for the recipient's benefit. Balance negative feedback with praise and encouragement.



④ **Discuss solutions.** Invite the person to respond. For all employees, the goal is to do well on the job and bring out the best in others.

As a recipient, ask your boss for feedback. It is essential for gaining skills, knowledge, capabilities and confidence. This may also be a chance to give your boss some feedback, provided you prepare in advance for a productive discussion.



💡 **Get your focus back.**

Near-constant stimuli from email, texts and social media create what University of Washington business professor Sophie Leroy, PhD, dubs **attention residue**. It breaks your focus, making it harder to return to the task at hand. Georgetown University researcher Cal Newport, PhD, advises deleting any social media not enhancing your life and placing email and texts on hold whenever possible. Then use an old-fashioned to-do list and stick to it. You'll prioritize important tasks and have a record of loose ends.

Brain Workouts

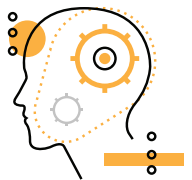
Can challenging your mind improve and protect your cognitive health, including memory?


So far, those promoting the supposed benefits of brain training activities, such as games and mental exercises, don't have solid proof to back their claims. However, brain workouts may still have potential benefits.

Researchers looking for ways to stave off the effects of aging on the brain and lower the risk of Alzheimer's are studying cognitive training exercises. These include difficult crossword puzzles and online interactive memory games. Scientists think brain workouts may improve cognitive performance, at least short term, in healthy older adults, but only in the area they exercised, such as memory or problem solving.

While there's no guarantee brain conditioning will improve your thinking skills and prevent dementia, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine researchers found "encouraging although inconclusive" evidence that 3 strategies may help potentially prevent cognitive impairment: 1) physical activity, 2) controlling hypertension and 3) brain exercises. Avoiding excessive alcohol use and keeping your cholesterol and blood sugar levels healthy may help too.

More research is needed, but regardless, it's just good to exercise your mind.



 **Study your health care plan before you need it.**

Most plans provide easy guidelines online and in booklets. First, read your **summary plan description (SPD)**. It lists covered services and how to access them (e.g., health care providers, hospital use and prescription drugs). Read the terms of use, your obligations and other plan provisions, including contact numbers, online patient portal, condition management and wellness information.

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.
— Confucius

 **Don't forget potassium.**

Every cell in your body needs the mineral potassium for normal muscle contraction, kidney function and nerve transmission. Potassium is also critical for heart function. A diet rich in potassium can help manage high blood pressure, which is a major risk for heart disease and stroke. In fact, increasing the amount of potassium in your diet and decreasing excess salt can help lower blood pressure that's too high. Potassium-rich foods include potatoes, spinach, tomatoes, broccoli, lentils and soybeans. Nuts, milk, yogurt, meats, poultry and fish are also good sources of the mineral.

Active at 50+

We all know people who seem younger than their years. Chances are they do more, move more and have more energy than others the same age. Science has shown that the more physically active we are throughout life the less biological aging takes place in our bodies.

Benefits: Exercising and staying physically active helps protect your heart, muscle strength, joint flexibility and mental function. Plus, exercise helps control weight and keeps your body youthful. Many studies have shown that we may live longer when we stay active.

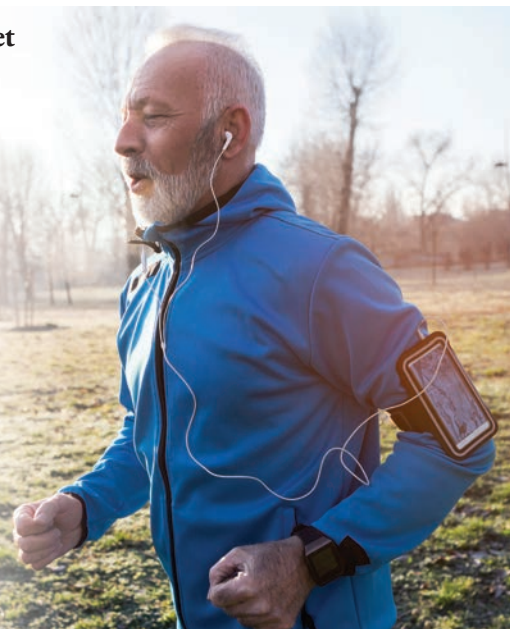
Exercise Guidelines for Adults

To protect longevity, your weekly exercise target should be at least:

- 1 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (e.g., brisk walking).
- 2 Or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., cross training).
- 3 Or a combination of both.
- 4 And 2 or 3 muscle-strengthening workouts.

(Children and teens should do at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.)

People who followed these exercise guidelines — **starting as late as age 60** — lowered their risk of heart failure by 12% to 31% based on a long-running study reported in *Circulation* this year.



ASK YOURSELF: Do you hope for good health with each passing decade? As much as possible, get up, get moving and enjoy living.

EXPERT advice

Q: Cautions for OTC medications?

A: Many people assume over-the-counter medications are safe, but they can have side effects or interactions. This is especially true when taking multiple OTC meds or using them with prescription drugs.



Read the drug label.

Check the ingredients, uses and warnings such as not to mix with alcohol. Carefully follow product directions.

Avoid multiple sources. Make sure you're not getting the same drug from more than 1 product. For instance, acetaminophen is commonly in painkillers and cold or flu remedies. You could easily get too much if you take more than 1 acetaminophen product at the same time. The same is true for all other active ingredients, such as decongestants.

If you have any medication questions, ask your health care provider or pharmacist. Have your provider monitor all of your prescription and OTC medicines.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Helping Your School-Age Child Use Medication

If your child needs to take medication at school, these tips can help:



CONTACT your child's homeroom teacher and school nurse. Determine if your child will be given the medicine or take it by themselves. Alert school personnel to any warning signs your child may need emergency medications.

ASK the school about a 504 plan, a written explanation of how the school will accommodate your child's medication needs. Federal law requires all public schools and many private schools to do this.

TALK to your youngster about the importance of taking their medicine and how it needs to be taken on time to make them feel better. If they must go to the nurse's office for their medication, assure them that many other children also take medicine at school, and they don't need to feel different.

IF your child takes medication daily, before or after school, create a routine to keep them on schedule. Put a calendar or chart nearby and have your child add a sticker or checkmark after taking their medicine. Make sure schoolbags containing their medication are kept in the same place at home. Check to see if the medicine is being taken, and ask your pharmacy if auto-refill is available.

EXPERT advice

Q: Official definition of bullying?

A: A bully hurts others through repetitive, unwanted aggression, using a power imbalance — either real or perceived. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social (e.g., cyberbullying). Bullies often have more physical strength or social influence, but sometimes they are less socially connected or have been victimized themselves. For example, people can also be involved with bullying indirectly by passively witnessing or laughing at others who are being bullied.

Anyone who is perceived as being different can be the target of bullying, whether it's because someone wears glasses, appears depressed or belongs to a different ethnicity. While federal laws prohibit specific types of bullying, a supportive, anti-bullying environment in the community is the key to prevention.

Bullying can have negative and sometimes long-term effects on bullies, victims and even bystanders. Learn more at stopbullying.gov.

— Eric Endlich, PhD

“Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't.”

— Rikki Rogers

Each year, human papillomavirus (HPV) causes about 33,700 cancers. These HPV-attributable cancers have increased significantly in the past 15 years. In most cases, the body's immune system cures the HPV infection, but certain strains persist, causing cervical, throat, vaginal, penile and anal cancers. More than 1 in 5 U.S. adults are infected with HPV, the most common sexually transmitted disease. **The good news:** Since children, teens and young adults began getting the vaccine, infections have decreased significantly. The vaccine can prevent more than 90% of HPV-caused cancer cases, according to the CDC. Also, in October the FDA expanded approval of the vaccine to include people ages 27 through 45.

“Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear.”

— George Addair

Cook Up Safety

It all boils down to safe practices when it comes to preventing burns in the kitchen. Here are the ingredients to make sure you or your little ones don't end up in the emergency room:

- **USE** the back burner to prevent little hands from reaching hot pots. If you need to use front burners, make sure pot handles are turned inward.
- **KEEP** hot foods away from counter or table edges.
- **USE** oven mitts or potholders to move heated pots or dishes. **Caution:** If a mitt is wet, it can cause scalds when combined with heat.
- **OPEN** containers from an oven or a microwave slowly and away from your face — steam can burn.
- **NEVER** leave a pot or pan that is cooking on a burner unattended.
- **USE** a frying pan screen to prevent hot oil from splattering. Never add water to a pan with hot oil or it could splatter.
- **DON'T** leave home if you have something baking in the oven.



- **SET** your water heater to 120°F or lower to prevent scalds. Install scald-prevention tempering valves or thermostatic mixing valves.
- **KNOW** that microwaves heat unevenly, so stir all foods or drinks before eating or drinking. Avoid heating baby bottles in a microwave for this reason. Instead place them in warm water to heat.
- **BUY** a Class ABC extinguisher to put out kitchen fires. A Class K extinguisher is often used in commercial kitchens. If you don't have an extinguisher handy, use a lid to put out a grease fire — never throw water, flour or cooking powders onto a grease fire. Instead use baking soda or salt.

SAFETY corner

AVOID Tech Support Scams

“Virus detected! Click here or call this number for a free security scan and repair.” If you've received a message like this on your device, the Federal Trade Commission advises you to ignore it.

It's a tech support scam to steal your money or even get you to download malicious software that can steal your personal information. **Warning:** Some of these companies can look legitimate by using company logos and websites that closely resemble the actual company support page.

If you suspect something is wrong with your device, call the company that sold it to you; do not call numbers, click on or download anything you see in the bogus message. Also, if someone asks you to pay for tech support with a gift card, cash, reload card or a wire transfer, it is a scam. Please report this at [FTC.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint).

dollars&sense

Saving for Your Child's College Fund



College costs continue to soar. Thankfully, there's a variety of options for funding your children's college education:

The 529 Savings Option: This account has high contribution limits and lets your dollars grow and remain tax free upon withdrawal. Use it to pay for costs of qualified colleges nationwide. States that offer the 529 savings option generally don't require state residency to participate.

The 529 Prepaid Plan: Parents can lock in tuition rates in today's dollars. Not all states offer them, however. Both 529 plans are counted as parental assets, which don't affect the student's Free Application for

Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as student-owned assets would.

Coverdell Education Savings Accounts: Withdrawals are tax free and can be used to pay for K-12 and college expenses. Coverdell accounts are also counted among parental assets. The contribution limit is \$2,000 annually. There are also income limits on who can open a Coverdell.

Uniform Transfer to Minors Act and Uniform Gift to Minors Act: These accounts act as trusts, and can fund anything (airline tickets home, computers, etc.) as long as it benefits the student. However, the accounts are considered student assets, which could harm financial aid offers.

Save a Life With CPR

If you see another adult suddenly collapse, you can save that person's life by immediately performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

CPR is a lifesaving procedure performed when a person's heart suddenly stops. It is most useful for rescuing people in sudden cardiac arrest, heart attacks or drowning when breathing or heartbeat stops.

In 2017, the American Heart Association (AHA) updated its guidelines, further defining the most effective rescue steps. The procedure for traditional CPR chest compression-to-breath ratio is 30 compressions to 2 breaths, with each breath lasting just 1 second. (This type of CPR is performed by medical professionals and other trained responders.)

The AHA also continues to encourage untrained, lay rescuers to perform bystander CPR. This is the hands-only, no-breath method.* People who receive hands-only CPR are twice as likely to survive as those who do not. Here's how to do hands-only CPR:

Call 9-1-1. (If others are with you, have 1 of them call while you begin chest compressions.) You will be asked to place the phone on speaker so the emergency dispatcher can help you and any other bystanders check the person's breathing, get the precise location and provide instructions, including:

- 1 **Kneeling close to the person's chest,** place the heel of 1 hand over the other in the middle of the chest.
- 2 **Extend your arms completely and push down hard** at a 90-degree angle (that's 1 compression).
- 3 **After the push,** completely release your pressure.
- 4 **Aim for 100 or more compressions per minute.** When you tire, try to switch with someone nearby to get a break (if possible).

***Note:** Experts caution that for drowning victims or people deprived of oxygen, rescue breaths are still necessary.

Where can you learn more?

The AHA, American Red Cross, YMCAs and many local hospitals offer classes (they may or may not be free). You can also watch videos that demonstrate hands-only CPR: heart.org/HandsOnlyCPR (AHA) or youtu.be/-Yqk5cHXsko (Red Cross).



How does **cardiac arrest** differ from a **heart attack**?

It's an important distinction:

A **heart attack** occurs when the coronary arteries can't supply enough blood.

1. **It's also called myocardial infarction,** and it can cause permanent damage to the heart muscle, and death.
2. **Symptoms may include** chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath or nausea. Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most start slowly, with mild symptoms.

3. Medical conditions leading to heart attack include: plaque buildup in the arteries (atherosclerosis); heart muscle or valve disorder; high blood pressure or abnormal heartbeat (arrhythmia).

Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly stops pumping blood.

1. **It usually happens when the ventricles** in the lower or upper heart chambers beat too fast, failing to exchange blood properly between heartbeats; the ventricles fill with blood and can't continue normal pumping to sustain life.
2. **A person in cardiac arrest** may quickly lose consciousness and have no pulse, and die without emergency treatment. Fainting is usually the first sign of cardiac arrest.
3. **Common causes include:** arterial disease, viral infections of the heart, inherited disorders, obesity, smoking and heavy alcohol use.

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Focus Forward

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DR. ZORBA'S corner

Children are playing

30% less today than they did a decade earlier. Recent research published in the *Journal of Pediatrics* shows that children are playing less (for fun and enjoyment) with their friends and their parents. Screen time is taking away from interaction time, which is critical to a child's development. We know that we should read to our kids, but we should also play more with our kids. Hit the off button on that phone and play more — that's the bottom line. — Zorba Paster, MD



February Fill-in-the Blank Puzzle

Find out how well you know the topics covered in this issue of the newsletter.

- 1 Excess _____ raises your heart disease risk. (2 words)
- 2 _____ damages blood vessels.
- 3 For composting, vegetable scraps are classified as _____.
- 4 You need 2 or 3 _____ workouts weekly. (2 words)
- 5 A diet rich in _____ can help manage high blood pressure.
- 6 In October the FDA expanded approval of the _____ vaccine to include people ages 27 through 45.
- 7 _____ (hands-only) is the no-breath method of CPR.
- 8 _____ occurs when the heart suddenly stops pumping blood. (2 words)

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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