



Don't go breakin' my heart!



Keep your vascular system healthy

Your heart has always been there for you – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. So, isn't it time you started giving your heart and vascular system a little TLC? Your vascular system is your body's network of blood vessels, carrying blood to and from the heart. When these blood vessels become clogged or damaged, your heart, brain and other body parts don't get the blood they need. This can lead to heart attack, stroke and other health problems.¹

How is your vascular health?

Heart disease causes one in every three deaths in the U.S.² Given the numbers, we all need to keep an eye on our heart health. But certain things make you more likely to develop heart disease.³

- Not getting enough exercise
- Being overweight
- Health problems that affect the heart and blood vessels, like high blood pressure, diabetes or high cholesterol
- Smoking
- History of heart disease in your family

Talk to your doctor about what you can do to protect your heart and vascular health.

The good news

You can make yourself healthier and lower your chance of getting heart or vascular disease. Here's how:⁴

- **Stop smoking.** It's not easy, but you're worth the effort. Tobacco products leave sticky plaque in your veins and arteries. They make it more likely you will have vascular problems. You don't have to quit alone. Reach out to friends, family, doctors and support hotline resources for help.
- **Eat a healthy, low-fat diet and keep good cholesterol levels.** Stock your fridge with fresh fruits and veggies, and low-fat or fat-free milk and cheese. Control your serving sizes, and read food labels carefully when shopping to avoid foods high in saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium or salt.
- **Work out regularly.** This can help you to:
 - Control your weight.
 - Lower your chance of getting heart disease.
 - Raise your chances of living longer. For every hour you spend exercising, you can add another two hours onto your life expectancy.⁵

Making changes to your lifestyle can be tough. But these small changes can make life better for you and your family – by helping you to be there for the big moments.



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Sources

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Million Hearts Initiative website: About Heart Disease & Stroke: Overview (accessed March 2015): millionhearts.hhs.gov/aboutths/overview.html

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Million Hearts Initiative website: About Heart Disease & Stroke: Consequences & Costs (accessed March 2015): millionhearts.hhs.gov/aboutths/cost-consequences.html

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Million Hearts Initiative website: About Heart Disease & Stroke: Risk Factors (accessed March 2015): millionhearts.hhs.gov/aboutths/risk-factors.html

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Million Hearts Initiative website: About Heart Disease & Stroke: Prevention (accessed March 2015): millionhearts.hhs.gov/aboutths/prevention.html

⁵ American Heart Association website: Physical activity improves quality of life (accessed March 2015): goredforwomen.org

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