

The **Heart** of it All



How can I keep my myself and my loved ones "heart healthy"?

Our families are made up of all ages, shapes, sizes, and fitness levels. But whether you are caring for your partner, a grandparent, teen, or toddler, there are simple steps you can take to ensure every member of your family stays heart healthy.

Habits for a Healthy Heart

Eat Healthy

- Include a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Eat fiber-rich whole grains
- Choose low-fat dairy products
- Eat lean meats, plant protein (beans, nuts and seeds) and at least two servings per week of fish high in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, trout, herring)
- Limit sodium to less than 1,500 mg a day
- Watch fat and sugar intake
- Drink alcohol only in moderation
- Watch portion sizes

Don't Smoke - and Stay Away from Secondhand Smoke

Smoking isn't just bad for your lungs; it's bad for your heart, too. Smoking damages the lining of your arteries, increasing your risk of a heart attack. Compared to non-smokers, smokers are more than twice as likely to develop heart disease. Quitting smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke are some of the most important things you can do for your health.

Get Moving

A regular exercise program helps to decrease your resting heart rate and boost good cholesterol. Aim to get 30 minutes of exercise a day. Walking is a great way to get started, because it's easy to do, inexpensive and available everywhere with no gear required. Small changes in exercise can have a big impact on cardiac wellness.

Keep Your Weight in Check

Your risk of heart disease and stroke lowers if you reach and maintain a healthy weight. Discuss your weight with your healthcare provider to make sure you are in the healthy range and determine which steps you can take to lose weight if you need to.

Sleep on It

Making sure you get a good night's sleep (at least seven hours per night) is another small step with big payoffs for heart health. Not getting enough sleep puts you at a higher risk for heart disease.

Treat Stress and Mental Health Problems

Keep stress in check by taking time each day to relax and unwind. Get help if you have trouble coping because of depression, anxiety, or other health problems.

DANGER SIGNALS

Chest pain is the most common symptom of a heart attack for men and women, but women often describe the sensation as pressure, tightness or an ache. Research also shows that less typical heart attack symptoms like back pain, nausea or fatigue are more common for women.

If you experience any of the following symptoms of a heart attack, call 911. Faster treatment means less damage to the heart muscle and better odds of a full recovery.

- ⚠ Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of your chest
- ⚠ Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw, stomach or shoulder
- ⚠ Shortness of breath (with or without chest discomfort)
- ⚠ Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

Know Your Numbers for Optimal Heart Health

Talk to your healthcare provider to learn your key health numbers to keep your heart strong and healthy.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Total cholesterol: less than 200 mg/dL

LDL "bad" cholesterol: less than 100 mg/dL

HDL "good" cholesterol: greater than 50 mg/dL

Triglycerides: less than 150 mg/dL

Blood pressure: less than 120/80

Fasting glucose: 60-100 mg/dL

Body mass index: less than 25

Waist circumference less than: 35"/women | 40"/men

ACTION ITEMS

NEED A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER?

Call St. Luke's Physician Referral at 314-205-6060 or [click here](#) to find a St. Luke's doctor.

NEED A CARDIOLOGIST OR SECOND OPINION?

Call St. Luke's Heart and Vascular Institute at 314-205-6801 or visit stlukes-stl.com/hearthealth.

NEED HEALTH EDUCATION?

Call 314-542-4848 or [click here](#) to learn more about St. Luke's classes and events.

