

# Why Should I Be Physically Active?

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If your doctor has suggested that you begin a physical activity program, follow that advice. People who don't get enough physical activity are much more likely to develop health problems.

Regular, moderate-intensity physical activity can lower your risk of

- Heart disease and heart attack
- High blood pressure
- High total cholesterol, high LDL (bad) cholesterol and low HDL (good) cholesterol
- Overweight or obesity
- Diabetes
- Stroke



If you haven't been active and want to start exercising, first check with your doctor for a program that's right for you. Once you start, you'll find that exercise isn't just good for your health — it's also fun!

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## What else can physical activity do for me?

Physical activity also offers these benefits:

- Strengthens your heart, lungs, bones and muscles.
- Gives you more energy and strength.
- Helps control your weight and blood pressure.
- Helps you handle stress.
- Helps you sleep better.
- Helps you feel better about how you look.
- Helps you feel upbeat.

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## What kind of activities should I do?

You don't have to be an athlete to lower your risk of heart disease and stroke! If done on most or all days, you can benefit from moderate activities like these:

- Pleasure walking
- Gardening and yard work
- Moderate to heavy housework
- Pleasure dancing and home exercise

More vigorous physical activity can further improve the fitness of your heart and lungs. Start

slowly, and build up as your heart gets stronger. First, discuss exercise with your doctor or nurse. Then try one or more of these:

- Brisk walking, hiking or jogging
- Stair climbing
- Bicycling, swimming or rowing
- Aerobic dancing or cross-country skiing

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## How often should I be physically active?

- Work up to 30 to 60 minutes of daily activity.
- Make sure it's regular — most or all days of the week.

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## What else can I do?

Look for ways to add more physical activity to your daily routines. Making small changes in your lifestyle can make a big difference in your overall health. Here are some examples:

- Take a walk for 10 or 15 minutes during your lunch break.
- Take stairs instead of escalators and elevators.
- Park farther from the store and walk through the parking lot.

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## How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org) to learn more about heart disease.

3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org).

We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.

Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

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## What are the warning signs of heart attack and stroke?

### Warning Signs of Heart Attack

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly with mild pain or discomfort with one or more of these symptoms:

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- Other signs including breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

Call 9-1-1 ... Get to a hospital immediately if you experience signs of a heart attack or stroke!

### Warning Signs of Stroke

- Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

Learn to recognize a stroke. Time lost is brain lost.

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## Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

What's the best type of physical activity  
for me?

How much physical activity do I need?



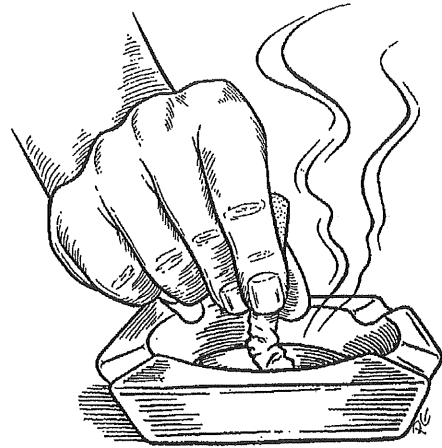
# How Can I Quit Smoking?

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## What if I go back to old habits?

Smoking cigarettes tops the list as the most important preventable major risk factor of our No. 1 killer — heart and blood vessel disease. The long list of diseases and deaths due to smoking is frightening. Smoking also harms thousands of nonsmokers, including infants and children, who are exposed to cigarette smoke.

If you smoke, you have good reason to worry about its effect on your health, your loved ones and others. You could become one of the more than 440,000 smoking-related deaths every year. When you quit, you reduce that risk tremendously!



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## Is it too late to quit?

No matter how much or how long you've smoked, when you quit smoking, your risk of heart disease and stroke starts to drop. In time your risk will be about the same as if you'd never smoked!

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## How do I quit?

### Step One

- List your reasons to quit and read them several times a day.
- Wrap your cigarette pack with paper and rubber bands. Each time you smoke, write down the time of day, how you feel, and how important that cigarette is to you on a scale of 1 to 5.
- Rewrap the pack.

### Step Two

- Keep reading your list of reasons and add to it if you can.
- Don't carry matches, and keep your cigarettes out of easy reach.
- Each day, try to smoke fewer cigarettes, and try not to smoke the ones that aren't most important.

### Step Three

- Continue with Step Two. Set a target date to quit.
- Don't buy a new pack until you finish the one you're smoking.
- Try to stop for 48 hours at one time.

### Step Four

- Quit smoking completely. Throw out all cigarettes and matches. Hide lighters and ashtrays.
- Stay busy! Go to the movies, exercise, take long walks, go bike riding.
- Avoid situations and "triggers" you relate with smoking.
- Find healthy substitutes for smoking.

- Carry sugarless gum or artificially sweetened mints. Munch carrots or celery sticks. Try doing crafts or other things with your hands.
- Do deep breathing exercises when you get the urge.

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## What if I smoke after quitting?

It's hard to stay a nonsmoker once you've had a cigarette, so do everything you can to avoid that "one." The urge to smoke will pass. The first 2 to 5 minutes will be the toughest. If you do smoke after quitting:

- This doesn't mean you're a smoker again — do something now to get back on track.
- Don't punish or blame yourself — tell yourself you're still a nonsmoker.
- Think about why you smoked and decide what to do differently the next time.
- Sign a contract to stay a nonsmoker.

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## What happens after I quit?

- Your senses of smell and taste come back.
- Your smoker's cough goes away.
- Your digestive system returns to normal.
- You feel alive and full of energy.
- You breathe much easier.
- It's easier to climb stairs.
- You're free from the mess, smell and burns in clothing.
- You feel free of "needing" cigarettes.
- You'll live longer and have less chance of heart disease, stroke, lung disease and cancer.

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## How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org) to learn more about heart disease.
3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org).

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## Do you have questions or comments for the doctor or nurse?

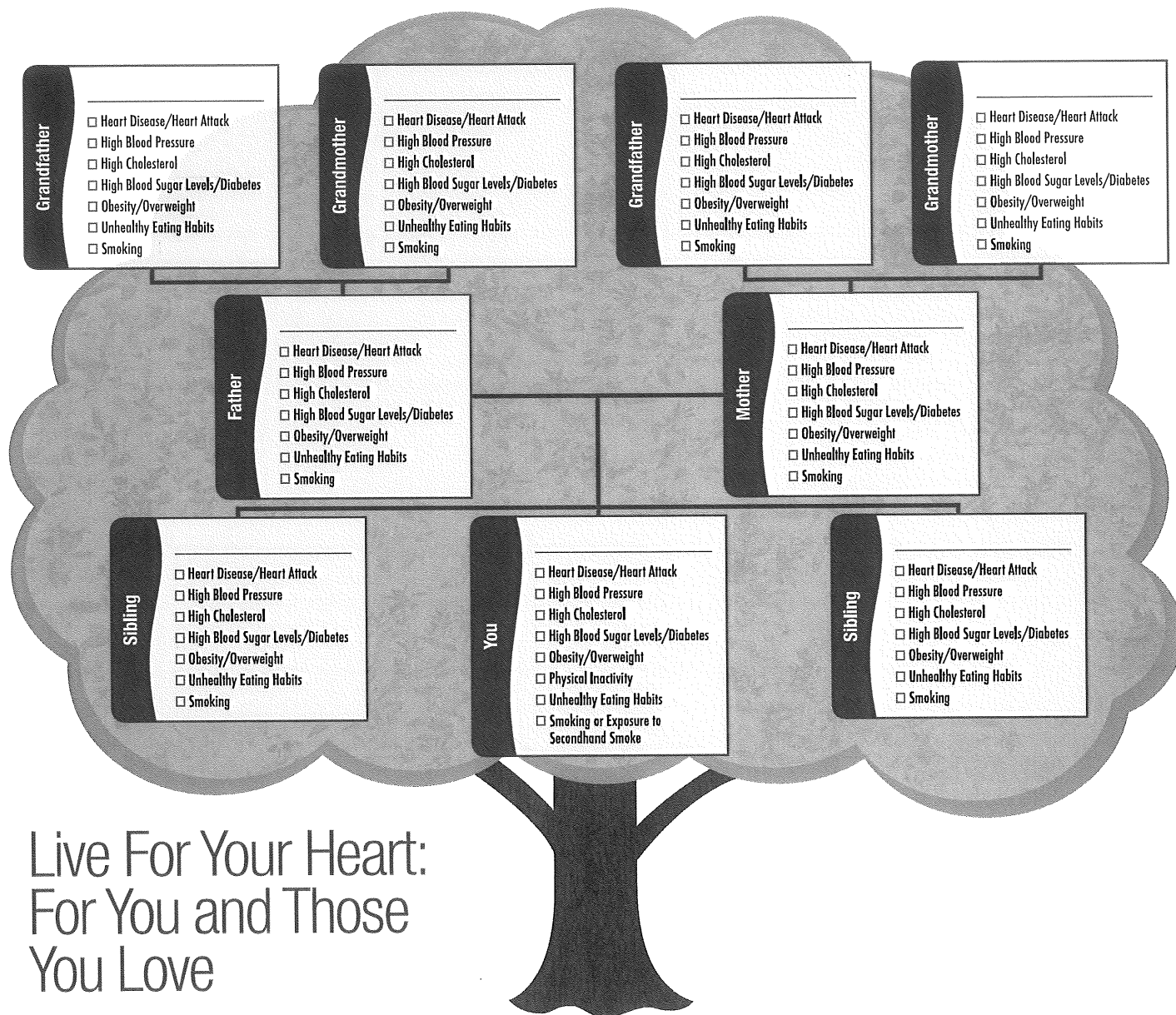
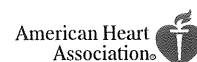
Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

When will the urges stop?

How can I keep from gaining weight?



# Know Your Family History— A Risk Factor for Heart Disease



## Live For Your Heart: For You and Those You Love

### **DID YOU KNOW THAT...** the tendency to develop heart disease is passed from one family member to another?

Traditions, values and cooking recipes are not the only things that we can inherit from our family. Heart disease and risk factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high blood sugar levels and obesity, can also be inherited. In fact, **heart disease is the #1 killer of Hispanic women** and we are likely to develop risk factors 10 years earlier than non-Hispanic white women.

However, **the good news is that heart diseases can be prevented** by practicing healthy eating habits and frequent physical activity. These habits can also be passed along to younger generations.

The more we know about our family's health history, the more we can do to reduce our own risk and our family's risk of heart diseases.

Get started today with these easy steps:

1. Map out your blood relatives' health history using this document as a guide.
2. Talk with your medical professional about what this means to you and to your family.
3. Start practicing healthy eating habits and frequent physical activity with your family to avoid developing risks for heart disease.

Visit [GoRedCorazon.org](http://GoRedCorazon.org) or call **1-888-474-VIVE** to get a **FREE** red dress pin and heart health information for you and those you love.

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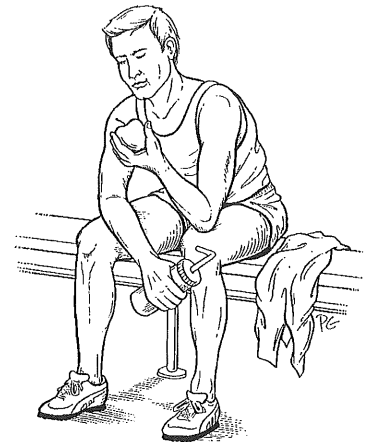


# How Can I Make My Lifestyle Healthier?

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Heart and blood vessel diseases are our nation's No. 1 killer. Nearly 2,400 Americans die each day from them! Meanwhile, over 79 million adult Americans are living with them. Many are struggling to recover from heart attack or stroke, while others at high risk are getting the care and making the changes necessary to lower their risk.

You can do plenty to get your heart in shape, even if you've had a bad experience. Healthy changes will help you feel and look better! Death rates from heart attack, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases are going down. Healthy lifestyles play a big part! Now's the time to make up your mind to take some control over your future. You'll find that once you make one change, the next comes more easily. Here are some simple steps to take:



- Don't smoke.
- Have your blood pressure checked regularly.
- Improve your eating habits.
- Be more physically active.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Have regular medical check-ups.
- Take your medicine, if needed, to control high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes.

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## How do I stop smoking?

- Make an agreement with yourself to quit.
- Ask your healthcare professional for information and programs that may help.
- Fight the urge by going where smoking isn't allowed, and avoid being around people who smoke.
- Reward yourself when you quit.
- Keep busy doing things that make it hard to smoke, like working in the yard, washing dishes and being more active.
- Remind yourself that smoking causes many diseases, and can harm or kill you and others.
- Ask your family and friends to support you.

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## How do I change my eating habits?

- Ask your doctor, nurse or licensed nutritionist for help.
- Choose less often foods like egg yolks, fatty meats, skin-on chicken, butter and cream.
- Cut down on saturated fat, *trans* fat, sugar and salt.
- Substitute fat-free or low-fat milk for whole milk.
- Bake, broil, grill, roast and poach — don't fry foods in oil.
- Eat fruits, vegetables, cereals, dried peas and beans, pasta, fish, skinless poultry and lean meats.
- Limit alcohol to one drink a day for women and two for men, and if you don't drink, don't start.

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## What about physical activity?

- Regular physical activity reduces your risk of heart attack and stroke and makes your heart stronger.
- It helps control your weight and blood pressure, helps you relax, and can improve your mood!
- Check with your doctor before you start if you've been inactive a long time.
- Start slow and build up to a total of 30 to 60 minutes on most or all days of the week.
- Look for chances to be more active. Take 10 to 15-minute walking breaks during the day or after meals.

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## How can I be more relaxed?

- Take 15 to 20 minutes a day to sit quietly, breathe deeply and think of a peaceful picture.
- Be more active every day.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Try to avoid things that upset you, such as rush-hour traffic.
- Change how you respond to difficult situations. Be positive, not negative.

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## How can I remember to take my medicine?

- Take it at the same time every day.
- Use a weekly pill box with separate compartments for each day or time of day.
- Leave notes to remind yourself.
- Ask family and friends to help remind you.
- Wear a wristwatch with an alarm.
- Try an e-mail reminder or beeper service.

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## Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

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What's the most important  
change I can make?

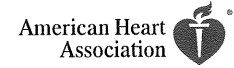
What if I go back to bad habits?

Your contribution to the American Heart Association supports research that helps make publications like this possible.

The statistics in this sheet were up to date at publication. For the latest statistics, see the *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update* at [americanheart.org/statistics](http://americanheart.org/statistics).

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# Heart Disease and Stroke

## Overview

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More women die of cardiovascular disease than from the next four causes of death combined, including all forms of cancer. But 80 percent of cardiac events in women could be prevented if women made the right choices for their hearts involving diet, exercise and abstinence from smoking. Make it your mission to learn all you can about heart attacks and stroke — don't become a statistic.

## Heart Attack

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A heart attack occurs when the blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked, usually by a blood clot. If this clot cuts off the blood flow completely, the part of the heart muscle supplied by that artery begins to die.

### ***Signs of a Heart Attack:***

1. Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of your chest. It lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
2. Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
3. Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
4. Other signs such as breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.
5. As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

**If you have any of these signs, don't wait more than five minutes before calling for help. Call 9-1-1...Get to a hospital right away.**

## Stroke

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Stroke is the No. 3 cause of death in America. It's also a major cause of severe, long-term disability. Stroke and TIA (transient ischemic attack) happen when a blood vessel feeding the brain gets clogged or bursts. The signs of a TIA are like a stroke, but usually last only a few minutes. If you have any of these signs, don't wait more than five minutes before calling for help. Call 9-1-1 to get help fast if you have any of these, but remember that not all of these warning signs occur in every stroke.

### **Signs of Stroke and TIAs**

1. Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
2. Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
3. Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
4. Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
5. Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Also, check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared. It's very important to take immediate action. Research from the American Heart Association has shown that if given within three hours of the start of symptoms, a clot-busting drug can reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke.

**Learn more about heart attack and stroke at [heart.org](http://heart.org).**

