

THE HEART OF THE MATTER:

Prevention Saves Lives

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in every racial and ethnic group in the United States. One person dies every 34 seconds due to heart disease or stroke. The good news is that heart disease can be prevented and treated. The key is to make lifestyle changes such as eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and quitting smoking. Regular screenings for high blood pressure and cholesterol can also help identify problems early on. There are also medications available to help keep your heart healthy. While heart disease is serious, there are steps you can take to reduce your risk and protect your heart. So, stay informed, stay active and stay healthy!

The Importance of Exercise

Exercise is a powerful tool in the prevention of cardiovascular disease and management of hypertension. The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, as well as muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days per week. Regular physical activity has been proven to reduce the risk of heart disease by improving blood flow, increasing energy levels, reducing stress and helping to maintain a healthy weight. Additionally, it can help to lower blood pressure, which can reduce the risk of hypertension. Exercise doesn't have to be a chore — it can be enjoyable! Consider trying a new activity like playing a sport, dancing or even going for a brisk walk. Make sure to speak with your doctor before starting any new exercise routine. By incorporating regular physical activity into your life, you can help to keep your heart healthy and ward off cardiovascular disease.



Let Food Be Thy Medicine

Eating food that is nourishing is one of the most important things we can do to prevent cardiovascular disease and hypertension. Creating a balanced diet is key to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Here are a few tips for ensuring your diet is balanced and nutritious:

- ✔ **Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.** They provide essential vitamins and nutrients that our bodies need, and they're low in calories. Include a variety of different colors in your meals because different colors provide different nutrients
- ✔ **Consume a variety of lean proteins like fish, chicken and legumes.** These can help to keep your cholesterol levels in check and provide essential amino acids
- ✔ **Choose healthy fats like nuts, seeds and avocados.** Healthy fats keep you feeling full while also providing valuable nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids
- ✔ **Finally, limit your intake of processed foods and sugar.** Processed foods and sugar consistently raise your blood glucose and insulin levels. Hyperglycemia (high blood sugar) and hyperinsulinemia (the corresponding rise in blood insulin levels) have been found to be key factors that contribute to the development of cardiovascular disease

By following these tips, you can create a balanced diet that will help to keep your heart healthy and prevent cardiovascular disease and hypertension.



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Kick the Habit

Smoking increases the risk of heart attack, stroke and other diseases of the cardiovascular system. It also contributes to high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart attack and stroke. If you want to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease and hypertension, quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do. The good news is that it's never too late to quit. Even if you have already developed heart disease or high blood pressure, quitting smoking can still reduce your risk of further complications and improve your overall health. So, if you're a smoker, the time to quit is now! With the help of a doctor or other health care provider, you can develop a plan to quit smoking and start living a healthier life.



Lifestyle modifications that can be used to prevent and manage cardiovascular disease and hypertension include the following:



Stress reduction



Sufficient sleep



Social activities

It's important to note that lifestyle modifications are not a cure for cardiovascular disease or hypertension. Rather, they are preventive measures that can help reduce risk factors and improve overall health and well-being.

Get Regular Checkups

Regular medical checkups are an important part of preventing and managing cardiovascular disease and hypertension. You should schedule a medical checkup once a year, or more often if your health care provider recommends it. During your medical checkup, your health care provider will perform a full physical exam and review your medical history. Additionally, they may recommend certain tests — such as blood pressure testing, blood sugar testing and cholesterol testing — to assess your risk of cardiovascular disease and hypertension, and determine if you would benefit from medications. During your medical checkup, be sure to discuss any lifestyle changes you've made in an effort to prevent or manage cardiovascular disease or hypertension, as well as any symptoms you've experienced that may be due to these conditions.

A Matter of Urgency

Taking care of your heart is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the world, and yet it is largely preventable. By making lifestyle changes and taking preventive measures, you can reduce your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Make sure to get regular checkups and screenings to monitor your heart health. Taking care of your heart doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming. The key is to start today and make small changes that will add up to a healthier life.

