



Heart Health at All Ages

20s and 30s

- **Know your family history.** Know who in your family has experienced heart disease and talk to your doctor about how your family history may affect your own risk profile.
- **Take stock of your health habits.** The eating and exercise habits you learned growing up can be either a boon or a burden to you.
- **Don't smoke.** If you don't smoke, congratulations! If you do smoke, stop now. Of all the things you can do to protect your heart, smoking cessation is perhaps the most beneficial.
- **Develop healthy eating and exercise habits.** Learn how to eat and exercise in a way that supports your heart health now and in the future.

30s and 40s

- **Pay attention to your numbers.** This is a good time to know your cholesterol, blood pressure, and ideal weight. If your numbers are within normal limits, you have a good baseline for comparison as you get older. If your numbers put you at elevated risk for future heart disease, now is the time to work with your health care provider to manage your numbers and lower your risk.
- **Set a good example for your children.** Children are influenced much more by what you do than what you say. Model good eating, exercise, and stress reduction strategies for them, and start them off on a lifetime of heart-healthy habits.
- **Take care of yourself.** The demands of managing a family and sometimes a career as well can seem like an excuse to put ourselves last and to abandon our good health habits.

40s and 50s

- **Continue to monitor your numbers.** It is wise to check your cholesterol at least every five years, annually if you are being treated for high cholesterol. Also continue to monitor your weight and blood pressure and follow your doctor's recommendations for optimum management.

- **Continue to model heart healthy behavior for your children.** Bring good food choices into the house, limit TV and computer time, and get plenty of exercise. If you haven't yet adopted a heart-healthy lifestyle yourself, it is not too late to do so. However, you should check with your doctor before embarking on a new exercise program.

50s, 60s and Beyond

- **A renewed focus** on your heart-healthy lifestyle is critical to help you protect your heart- and it's never too late to make changes.
- **Maintain good sleep habits.** Uninterrupted sleep becomes more difficult with menopause, but it is important to your general and cardiac health to aim for 6 to 8 hours of good quality sleep every night.
- **Be aggressive about investigating cardiac concern.** Even if they are not "typical", new or unusual symptoms could herald trouble and need to be discussed with your physician. Symptoms, evaluation, and treatment of heart disease are different in women and men.

GotHealth? Tip of the Month

Go Fish!

- Eating a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids can also help ward off heart disease. Many fish, such as salmon, tuna, sardines, and herring, are rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Try to eat fish at least twice a week.

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Wellness information courtesy of Wellness Proposals