HEART-HEALTHY HABITS

What simple steps can you take to keep your heart healthy? Adopting the following five daily habits can help lower your risk of cardiovascular disease and keep your heartbeat going strong!

1.   **Eat healthy fats, <u>not</u> trans fats.** While we need saturated, polyunsaturated, and unsaturated fats for a healthy diet, we never need trans fat. Often found in packaged snacks and fried fast food, trans fats clog your arteries by raising your LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and lowering your HDL (good) cholesterol levels.

2.   **Floss daily.** Good dental hygiene is not just important for fresh breath. Those with gum disease often have the same risk factors for heart disease, and certain bacteria in the mouth can move into the bloodstream and cause inflammation in the blood vessels.

3.   **Get a good night's sleep.** Researchers found adults who sleep less than 6 hours per night may be twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke than those who get the recommended 7-8 hours of sleep per night. Lack of sleep is believed to aggravate underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure and inflammation.

4.   **Stand up.** Studies show staying seated for long periods of time—no matter how much daily exercise you get—is bad for your health and associated with an increased risk of suffering a cardiovascular event. Take frequent short walks throughout the day and try taking phone calls while standing.

5.   **Stay away from secondhand smoke.** The risk of developing heart disease is 25 to 30 percent higher for people who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work, and that risk is increased even more for nonsmokers who also have high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol.

Source: Cleveland Clinic (health.clevelandclinic.org)

Total health

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