

## Keys to a Healthy Heart

### What is Atherosclerosis?

- Described as "hardening of the arteries."
- Arteries thicken and lose their flexibility as deposits of fat and plaque block blood flow.
- Can happen to any artery in the body.

### What is Coronary Artery Disease?

The arteries that supply the heart become severely narrowed, decreasing supply of oxygen-rich blood to heart.

#### Risk Factors we can't Control

- Being male
- Being a post-menopausal female
- Older age
- Family history of heart attack or coronary artery disease

#### Risk Factors that we can Change to Reduce Risk of Heart Disease

- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Lack of exercise
- Obesity

## Keys to a Healthy Heart

Make room in your life for some heart-healthy changes.

### 1. If you smoke, stop.

About 30% of all heart disease deaths are directly related to cigarette smoking.

Effects of smoking on your heart:

- Decreases oxygen to your heart
- Increases blood pressure & heart rate
- Increases in blood clotting
- Cigarettes damage the cells that line coronary arteries & other blood vessels
- Speeds the build-up of cholesterol & plaque
- Just 1-14 cigarettes per day triple the risk of heart trouble

### 2. Load up on heart-friendly foods.

- Eat more vegetables, fruit, whole grains & legumes (beans).
- Limit fat intake. Use fats high in monounsaturates - liquid at room temp.
- Eat a variety of foods high in protein.  
(Red meat & dairy products) are among the main culprits in increasing heart disease risk. Balancing animal, fish, and vegetable sources of protein can reduce your risk.
- Limit intake of cholesterol - found in high fat animal products.
- Eat complex carbohydrates (bread, rice, pasta & grains) & limit simple carbohydrates (regular soda, sugar, sweets).
- Eat smaller but more meals throughout the day (5 - 6 mini-meals).
- Reduce salt intake.
- Drink 32 to 64 oz. of water daily (unless fluid restricted).
- Eat fiber - grains, beans, fruit, & veggies.

### **3. Get moving, exercise can.**

- Increase your HDL cholesterol (the "good" cholesterol)
- Lower your blood pressure
- Burn off extra pounds
- Make you feel good
- AMA recommends 30 - 60 minutes of moderately vigorous exercise at least 3-4 times a week. Check with your doctor before starting a new workout program.

### **4. Monitor your cholesterol.**

- Cholesterol is a soft waxy-like material that is made in the liver of animals
- Found in animal foods such as egg yolks, milk fat, organ meats and shellfish
- Limit intake to 300 milligrams of cholesterol per day

### **5. Watch your weight.**

#### **6. If you drink, take it easy.**

- More than a couple of drinks a day can increase your blood pressure.
- Heavy drinking every day over 10 years can cause damage to heart muscle.

### **7. Keep your blood pressure under control.**

- High blood pressure increases the risk of coronary artery disease & stroke.

- Exercise, weight loss and lowering salt intake can lower blood pressure.
- You may need medicine to control - talk to your doctor.

#### **8. Reduce your stress.**

- Emotional distress is hard on the heart. It increases your heart rate, BP & your breathing grows shallow. Deep breathing exercises can reverse this response.
- If you're under too much stress or feeling depressed, seek out help from a psychologist, therapist or your primary care physician.

#### **Teach your Children**

It's never too soon to involve your children. Help them learn good habits right now.

- Exercise and play with your kids.
- Explain the dangers of smoking.
- Provide daily fruits, veggies, and whole grains rather than sodas & junk food.

## Questions About Heart Disease

### DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER!

1. What is coronary heart disease?
2. What are risk factors to heart disease that we cannot control?
3. 30% of heart is related to what?
4. Is drinking good for your heart?            True   or   False
5. Cholesterol is good for you,    True   or   False,   what is cholesterol and where is it found?
6. What are the 5 things exercise can do to prevent heart disease?
7. To reduce the risk of heart disease you should not decrease fat intake?
  - a. True                    b. False
8. To reduce the risk of heart disease you should
  - a. Eat 5-6 small meals and snacks per day
  - b. Eat 5-6 small meals daily
  - c. Eat 3 balanced meals
  - d. Eat how many times you want as long as it's healthy
9. List 2 good habits to teach young kids

10. How many minutes or hours does the AMA suggest you should devote to daily exercise?
11. How many days per week does the AMA recommend for exercise?
12. List the effects of smoking mentioned in the article above