Dignity Health
Heart and Vascular Institute
of Greater Sacramento

What You Know Can Be a Lifesaver

Your Guide to Heart Health

Women's Heart Program | Comprehensive, compassionate care

Your Guide to Heart Health

Through our Women's Heart Program, we hope to educate, motivate and inspire women to understand their own personal risk factors for heart disease and to take action to keep their heart healthy.

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First, you will learn a little bit about your heart and how it works.

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Finally, we will give you tools and strategies to help you keep your heart healthy for years to come.

Be a Lifesaver

Educate | Motivate | Inspire

Heart disease claims more American lives every year than all forms of cancer combined — an astonishing statistic. In fact, annually, 11 times more women die of heart disease than breast cancer. Many women are surprised to learn that not only does heart disease kill more women than men every year, but 64% of women who die suddenly from heart disease had no previous symptoms.

What's more, heart attack warning signs vary between men and women.

Heart attack symptoms common in women include:

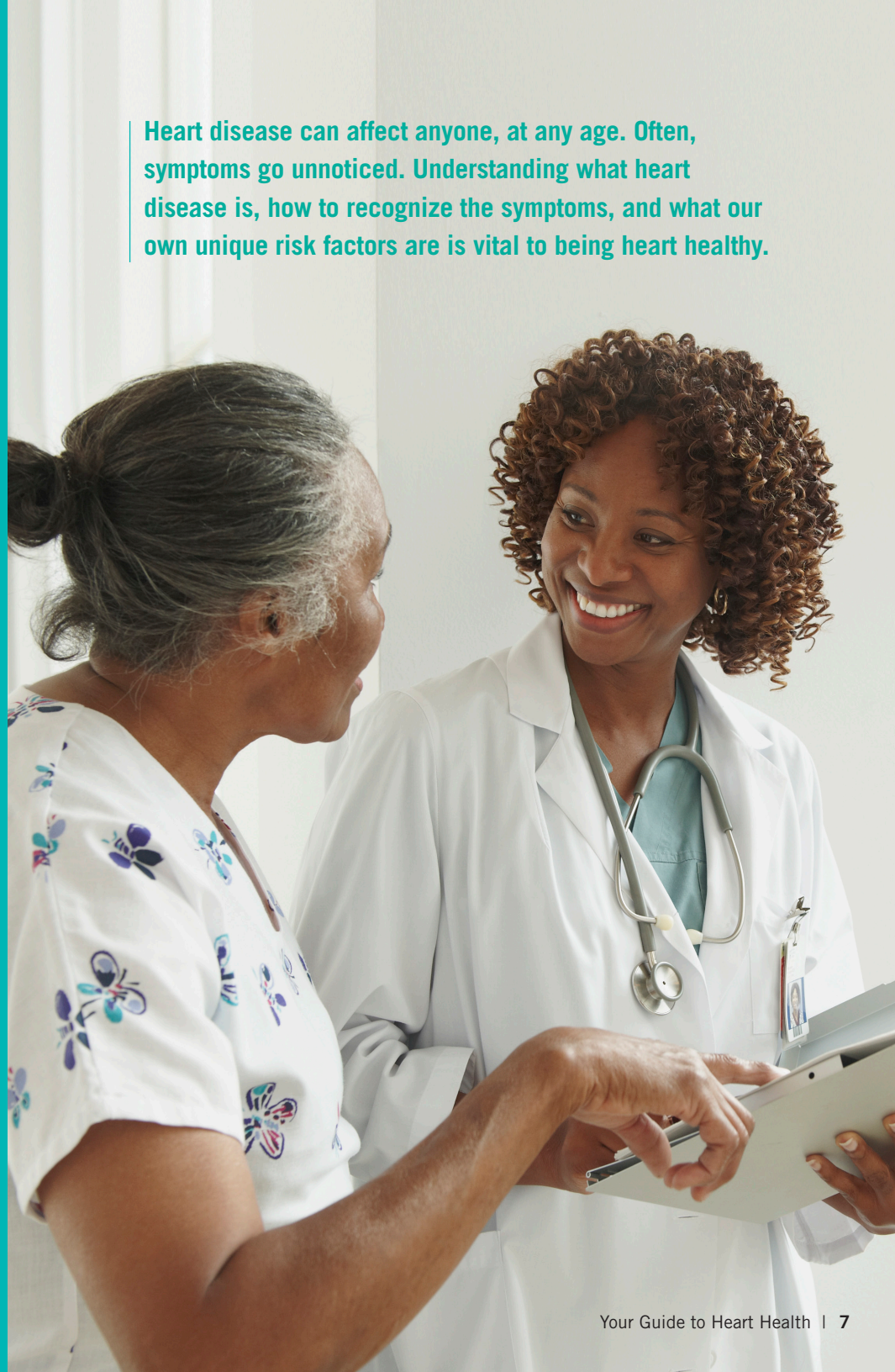
- Chest pain
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Lightheadedness
- Shortness of breath
- Pain in jaw, neck or upper back

Because heart disease strikes 1 in 5* women, Dignity Health Heart and Vascular Institute is committed to raising awareness of women's unique heart health needs, including female-specific risk factors and warning signs.

*Source: CDC

Educate

Heart disease can affect anyone, at any age. Often, symptoms go unnoticed. Understanding what heart disease is, how to recognize the symptoms, and what our own unique risk factors are is vital to being heart healthy.



Heart Attack

A heart attack happens when the flow of blood to the heart is restricted. This can be caused by the build up of fats or other substances on the walls of the coronary arteries.

Symptoms of a heart attack can vary widely from person to person and are different in men and women. Heart attack symptoms can be subtle, which is a reason to be alert to any changes in your health or that of someone you care for.

Common heart attack symptoms in women can include:

- Shortness of breath, with or without chest pain
- Nausea
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Flu-like symptoms, including chills and cold sweats
- Heart palpitations
- Chest discomfort,* including pain, tightness or pressure in the center of your chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and returns
- Discomfort in one or both arms (especially the left)
- Discomfort in your back, neck, jaw, teeth or between your shoulder blades
- Heartburn, indigestion or stomachache
- Extreme fatigue

*Source: American Heart Association

Common heart attack symptoms in men can include:

- Crushing, squeezing or burning pain
- Pressure or fullness in the center of the chest that may radiate to the neck, one or both arms, the shoulders, or the jaw, with chest discomfort that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and then returns
- Shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea, chills, sweating or weak pulse
- Cold and clammy skin, gray skin or appearance of severe illness
- Fainting (rare)

Time lost is heart muscle lost. If you experience any of these symptoms, either suddenly or gradually, seek immediate treatment.

If you suspect you or someone you are with is having a heart attack, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!

Good news! Lifestyle changes can help to prevent heart attacks!

Know Your Heart

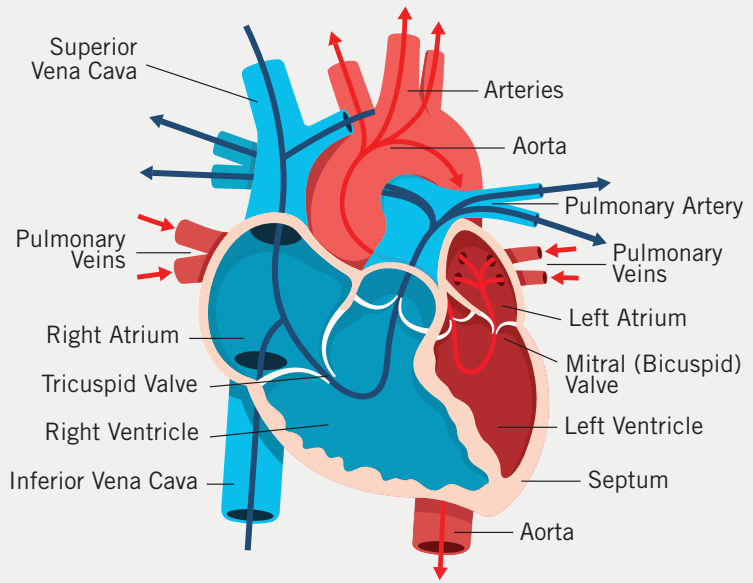
Your heart is responsible for pumping blood throughout your body. It is the engine that keeps your body running.

A healthy heart is about the size of your fist. It sits between your two lungs, close to the center of your chest.

The heart pumps blood that is rich with oxygen and nutrients to all the muscles and organs in your body through a series of blood vessels. These vessels get increasingly smaller, the farther they are from the heart itself.

Arteries are blood vessels that carry blood away from the heart. Veins carry blood from the body, back to the heart. The aorta is the main artery that carries blood from the heart to the body.

The heart has four chambers, two on the right and two on the left. The top chambers are called the left atrium and the right atrium. They collect blood as it comes back to the heart. The lower chambers are known as the left ventricle and the right ventricle. They pump blood back out from the heart.



There are valves between each of these chambers that ensure the blood flows in the right direction.

The two main arteries into the heart are the coronary arteries (one on each side of the heart).

The heart also contains a complex electrical system, which produces the impulses that cause the heart to contract.

When we talk about heart disease, we often talk about problems with arteries, valves, or the heart's electrical system.

Your heart beats about 100,000 times each day.

Your heartbeat is actually the sound of your heart valves opening and closing with each pump of the heart.

Your body's blood vessels would cover 60,000 miles.

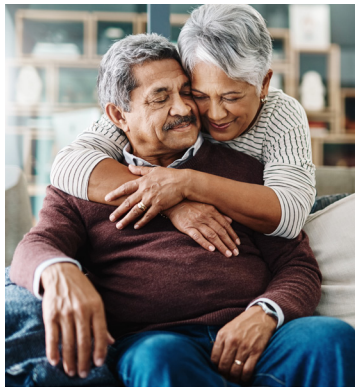
Stroke

A stroke happens when a blood clot blocks an artery or when a blood vessel breaks and disrupts blood flow to the brain.

When this happens, cells in your brain begin to die, affecting the abilities of the body controlled by the damaged brain area. Stroke can affect speech, movement and/or memory.

Stroke symptoms may include a sudden, unexplained headache as well as sudden changes in comprehension, communication, vision or motor skills.

Anyone, at any age, can experience a stroke. However, women, older adults and African Americans have a higher risk, as does anyone who has already had a stroke.



Most strokes can be prevented!

- Evaluate your risk factors
- Keep your blood pressure in a healthy range for you. High blood pressure if the no 1 preventable cause of stroke
- Learn how to spot a stroke FAST

Men and women who have strokes often feel similar symptoms including face drooping, arm weakness, problems seeing in one or both eyes, problems with balance and coordination. Women experiencing a stroke may also feel general weakness, disorientation, confusion, memory problems, fatigue, nausea, or vomiting.

Think FAST: Know the Signs of Stroke

Understanding and recognizing the symptoms of stroke quickly is vital to recovery. If you suspect someone may be having a stroke, think FAST!

Face drooping: One side of the face drooping or numb? Ask the person to smile.

Arm weakness: One arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms – does one drift downward?

Speech difficulty: Slurred speech, unable to speak, or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence like, "The sky is blue."

Time is critical: If any of these symptoms are present, call 911.

1 in 5 women will have a stroke. Risk factors unique to women include depression and the use of birth control medication, especially when combined with smoking.

When a stroke is happening, lost time is lost brain function.

Two million brain cells die every minute during a stroke.

If you or someone around you may be experiencing a stroke, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

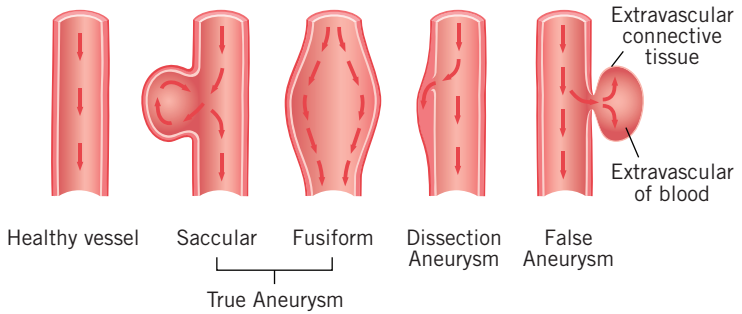
Aneurysm

An aneurysm occurs when an artery wall becomes weak so it stretches or bulges. Most aneurysms occur in the aorta, but they can also develop in other parts of the body, including the brain.

If an aneurysm in the brain bursts, that causes a stroke.

Aneurysms generally develop slowly with few, if any, symptoms. If you have an aneurysm that expands quickly or ruptures, the symptoms will be dramatic and may include pain, clammy skin, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, rapid heart rate, shock, and low blood pressure.

Types of Aneurysm



A ruptured aneurysm is a medical emergency. If you experience symptoms of an aneurysm, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

Fortunately, the same lifestyle changes that reduce your risk of a heart attack also reduce your risk of an aneurysm or stroke.

Heart Failure

Your heart is a vital organ responsible for supplying oxygen-rich blood to other parts of the body. It works like a pump that cycles blood through different organ systems.

Heart failure occurs when the heart cannot supply enough blood for the body's needs. For some people, their hearts cannot fill enough blood. For others, their hearts don't have enough strength to pump enough blood to the rest of their body. When heart failure happens, excess fluid may back up into the lungs, abdomen, and extremities.

Causes of Heart Failure

Heart failure has many causes including heart attack, chronic alcoholism, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, smoking and substance abuse.

Symptoms of Heart Failure:

- Shortness of breath during rest of activity
- Swelling of the hands, feet, legs, ankles, or abdomen
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Excessive tiredness, weakness, or fatigue
- Wheezing or coughing, especially when lying down or exercising
- Weight gain from fluid buildup
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

If you have more than one of these symptoms, even if you have not been diagnosed with any heart problems, report them to your doctor.

Heart Failure Treatment:

Heart failure treatment depends on the type and severity of your heart failure. The goal of treatment is to reduce symptoms, prevent it from getting worse, treat the underlying cause, and improve quality of life.

6.2 million Americans are living with heart failure

Early diagnosis and treatment can help people with heart failure live longer, more active lives

Blood Clots

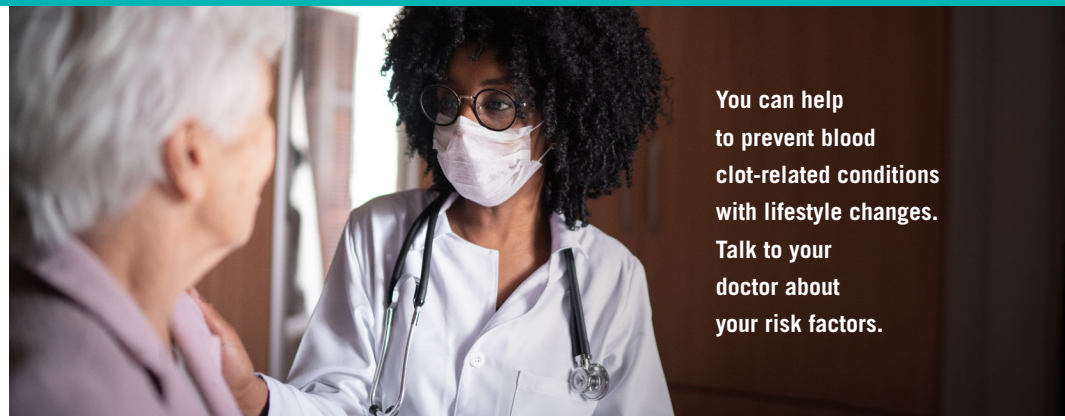
Your body's ability to form clots keeps it from losing too much blood if you get a cut or suffer an injury. A process called coagulation allows small blood cell fragments to clump together to block the flow of blood. When the injury heals, your body breaks down the clot and removes it.

When this process doesn't work properly, a clot can travel into arteries and veins in other parts of the body, such as the brain or heart. This is serious. In addition to causing heart attack or stroke, blood clots can cause other potentially dangerous heart-related conditions, including deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism and peripheral artery disease. Symptoms of these conditions are often subtle.

Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism:

If a blood clot forms in a large vein (usually in the lower leg, thigh or pelvis), you may suffer from deep vein thrombosis. When a portion of the clot breaks off and travels through the circulatory system to the lungs, it can cause a pulmonary embolism, which may be life threatening.

If you have peripheral artery disease, you are at much higher risk of heart attack or stroke.



Symptoms of Deep Vein Thrombosis:

- Recent swelling of an arm or leg
- Unexplained limb pain or tenderness in an arm or leg
- Skin that is warm to the touch
- Skin redness

Symptoms of Pulmonary Embolism:

- Recent or sudden shortness of breath
- Feeling of apprehension
- Chest pain
- Coughing up blood
- Sudden collapse

Peripheral Artery Disease:

Traveling blood clots and other accumulations of fatty deposits can narrow arteries and reduce blood flow to your limbs (most often your legs), heart or brain.

Symptoms of Peripheral Artery Disease:

- Fatigue, tiredness or pain in your legs, thighs or buttocks when you walk, which goes away when you rest
- Foot or toe pain that often disturbs your sleep
- Slow-to-heal wounds on your feet
- Changes in color or temperature of your legs

Arrhythmia

Your heart pumps blood through its four chambers in a series of contractions. When those contractions are disrupted, it can cause the heart to beat too fast, too slow, or erratically. This disruption in the rhythm of the heartbeat is called an arrhythmia — also known as an abnormal heartbeat.

While there are several types of arrhythmias, atrial fibrillation is the most common. Atrial fibrillation is an arrhythmia with an irregular and often rapid heartbeat. Symptoms of atrial fibrillation can come and go or be chronic and require treatment.

*An estimated 12 million people will have atrial fibrillation by 2030. More women than men experience it because of their longer life expectancy.**

Symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation:

- Palpitations (may feel like your heart is skipping a beat, fluttering or beating too hard or too fast)
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Weakness or problems exercising
- Dizziness or fainting
- Fatigue
- Confusion

Women are more likely to experience fatigue and weakness due to atrial fibrillation.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control

Atrial fibrillation puts you at greater risk for stroke or heart failure. If you experience symptoms, you should see your doctor. Atrial fibrillation is often managed with lifestyle changes and your doctor's help.

Motivate

Making changes to our diet, exercise and other daily habits can help reduce our risk for heart disease and can also reduce symptoms when heart disease is already present. The better we understand our current health, the more effective our lifestyle changes will be.

Understanding Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a fat-like, waxy substance. Our liver produces as much cholesterol as the body needs, however we also consume cholesterol in certain foods, including meat, poultry and full-fat dairy foods.

While we need cholesterol for good health, too much cholesterol can put us at risk for plaque buildup on our artery walls. This causes them to thicken or harden. This is known as atherosclerosis and leads to a narrowing of arteries, making it harder for the heart to pump blood. This plaque can also break off the artery wall and form clots.

There are two types of cholesterol — HDL and LDL. We want high levels of HDL and low levels of LDL. A complete cholesterol test will also measure triglycerides, another type of blood fat.

Total Cholesterol =
HDL + LDL + 20% of triglycerides

Cholesterol Levels
Normal or Heart Healthy

Total Cholesterol:	<200 mg/dl
LDL Cholesterol:	<100 mg/dl
HDL Cholesterol:	>50 mg/dl (women) >40 mg/dl (men)
Non-HDL Cholesterol:	<130 mg/dl
Triglycerides:	<150 mg/dl

Typically, high cholesterol does not produce any symptoms, so it's important to have yours checked regularly. The American Heart Association recommends adults 20 and older who do not have heart disease check their cholesterol about every five years.

Risk factors for high cholesterol include:

- Eating foods with saturated or trans fats
- Family history of high cholesterol or early heart disease
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Age (over 45 for men, over 55 for women)

Eating a healthy diet, exercising and not smoking all help to keep our cholesterol levels in the healthy range.

Understanding Your Blood Pressure

Every time your heart beats, it creates pressure on the walls of your blood vessels. If the force of this pumping is too high, over time it wears out the arteries. Persistent high blood pressure is a risk factor for heart disease.

You probably know that there are two numbers in your blood pressure reading. The top number is called systolic pressure. It measures the force in the arteries as the blood pumps out of the heart. It should be 120 mmHg or less.

The lower number is the diastolic pressure. It measures the force in the arteries as the heart rests between beats. It should be 80 mmHg or less.

Normal blood pressure is 120/80 mmHg or lower. Ask your doctor what the ideal blood pressure is for you and what blood pressure would be too low and a health concern for you.

High blood pressure often has few warning signs or symptoms, so it is important to take your blood pressure regularly so you can identify high blood pressure before it causes long-term damage.

Making lifestyle changes can make a big difference in your blood pressure! Quitting smoking, eating healthy foods and being more active can all help.

If your blood pressure reading is higher than 180/120, take it again. If it is still that high, seek immediate medical treatment.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mmHg (upper number)		Diastolic Pressure mmHg (lower number)
Normal	Less than 120	And	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	And	Less than 80
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	130-139	Or	80-89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	140 or higher	Or	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (consult your doctor immediately)	Higher than 180	And/or	Higher than 120

Improving Your Blood Pressure

Modification	Recommendation	Potential Reduction in Systolic Pressure
Weight Loss	Reach and maintain healthy weight	5-20 mmHg/ 22 lbs. lost
DASH eating plan	Fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy, low fat	8-14 mmHg
Restrict sodium	<2.4 grams sodium per day	2-8 mmHg
Physical activity	30 minutes, most days	4-10 mmHg
Moderate alcohol	1 drink/day for women	2-4 mmHg

Diabetes

Diabetes includes a group of diseases that affect how your body uses blood sugar (glucose). Glucose provides energy for your muscle and tissue cells and is the brain's primary fuel source.

People with diabetes are at increased risk for coronary artery disease and have heart disease death rates about 2 to 4 times higher than adults who don't have diabetes.

Types of Diabetes

Prediabetes: A serious health condition where blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. Approximately 96 million American adults — more than 1 in 3 — have prediabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes: Type 1 diabetes was once called insulin-dependent or juvenile diabetes. It usually develops in children, teens, and young adults, but it can happen at any age. Type 1 diabetes is less common than type 2 — about 5-10% of people with diabetes have type 1.

Type 2 Diabetes: This is the most common form of the disease, affecting approximately 90-95% of the 37 million Americans diagnosed with diabetes. Type 2 diabetes most often develops in people over age 45, but more and more children, teens, and young adults are also developing it.

Hispanic, non-Hispanic Black, American Indian and Alaskan Natives are at higher risk for diabetes.

Diagnosing Diabetes

Unfortunately, diabetes often goes undiagnosed. Many of the symptoms seem more bothersome than harmful; however left untreated diabetes can become very dangerous and even deadly.

Diabetes is diagnosed through either a fasting plasma glucose test or an oral glucose tolerance test.

Common symptoms of diabetes:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Increased fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurry vision
- Tingling, pain or numbness in your hands or feet

The American Diabetes Association recommends blood glucose screening if you are:

35 or older and overweight

Younger than 45 and overweight with additional risk factors, including a sedentary lifestyle or family history

Know Your Risk Factors

One of the most important steps you can take toward better heart health is understanding your own unique risk factors.

- Some risk factors are outside our control. Others are things that we have at least some control over; these risk factors present an opportunity to improve our health.
- To assess your personal risk, check each of the boxes below that apply to you.
- The more boxes you check, the higher your risk for heart disease (including heart attack, stroke, hypertension and diabetes). Share this assessment with your physician.

Risk factors that can be modified if detected early:		
Blood Pressure	My blood pressure was greater than 130/80 on two or more occasions.	❑ Yes ❑ No
	I am currently taking medication for high blood pressure.	❑ Yes ❑ No
Body Weight	My body mass index (BMI) is 25 of greater.	❑ Yes ❑ No
	My waist measurement is greater than 35 inches.	❑ Yes ❑ No
Smoking	I smoke cigarettes, vape, or live and work around people who smoke.	❑ Yes ❑ No
Diabetes	I am being treated for diabetes.	❑ Yes ❑ No
	I have been told my blood sugar is high.	❑ Yes ❑ No
Cholesterol	My cholesterol level is:	❑ Yes ❑ No
	HDL (good cholesterol) is less than 50 mg/dl (goal is >50 mg/dl)	❑ Yes ❑ No
	LDL (bad cholesterol) is greater than 100 mg/dl (goal is <100 mg/dl)	❑ Yes ❑ No
Physical Activity	I participate in physical activities less frequently than 30 minutes a day, most days of the week.	❑ Yes ❑ No
Mental Health	I suffer from anxiety and/or depression.	❑ Yes ❑ No

Risk factors that cannot be changed:		
Family History	I have/had a female relative with heart disease before age 65.	❑ Yes ❑ No
	I have/had a male relative with heart disease before age 55.	❑ Yes ❑ No
Age	I am older than 55 years.	❑ Yes ❑ No
Menstrual Cycle	I experienced early puberty (before age 9 to 12 years) or after 15 years old.	❑ Yes ❑ No
	I experienced early menopause (before age 50).	❑ Yes ❑ No
Breast Cancer Treatment	I am/was treated for breast cancer with:	
	Chemotherapy	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Radiation therapy	❑ Yes ❑ No
Pregnancy-Related Issues	During pregnancy I experienced:	
	Gestational Diabetes and/or impaired glucose tolerance	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Hypertension, pre-eclampsia, and/or Eclampsia	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Pre-term delivery (infant born prior to 37 weeks gestation)	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Infant born smaller in size than normal	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Congestive heart failure	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Coronary artery disease	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Deep vein thrombosis	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Pulmonary embolism	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Pulmonary hypertension	❑ Yes ❑ No
Rheumatologic Conditions	Diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis or lupus	❑ Yes ❑ No
Other	Fertility treatment	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Polycystic ovarian syndrome	❑ Yes ❑ No
	Post-menopausal hormone treatment	❑ Yes ❑ No

If you prefer to use the American Heart Association ASCVD cardiac risk calculator, use the QR code to the right that will lead you to our website and this ASCVD cardiac risk calculator. Please note this ASCVD risk calculator does not include the women specific cardiac risks noted above.

Know and Track Your Numbers

Once you understand your personal risk factors, it is important to know and track several key indicators of heart health.

Work with your doctor to determine which tests you need and then fill in the appropriate spaces on the tracking chart below and share regularly with your care team.

	Normal	Your Baseline	Goal	Insert Date and Results Below				
Blood Pressure	120/80 mmHg							
Pulse (resting)	60-100 beats/minute							
Weight								
BMI	18.5-24.9							
Total Cholesterol HDL LDL Non-HDL	<200 mg/dl >50 mg/dl (women) and >40 mg/dl (men) <130 mg/dl <100 mg/dl							
Triglycerides	<150 mg/dl							
Fast Blood Glucose	60-100 mg/dl							
HbA1c	<5.7%							
Sleep	8 hours per night							
Other:								
Other:								

Know Your Pulse

TAKE A SEAT

To get your resting pulse rate, sit down and be relatively still for 5 minutes. (Know that caffeine, nicotine or exertion can affect your pulse reading.)

REMOVE ACCESSORIES

Take off your watch or any bracelets and hold your left or right hand with your palm facing up and your elbow slightly bent.

FIND YOUR PULSE

With your other hand, move your index and middle fingers on your wrist, at the base of your thumb, until you find the pulse. Keep firm pressure to feel the pulse.

START COUNTING

Count the pulse for 30 seconds and multiply by 2 to get your heart rate in beats per minute. Take your pulse regularly and track any changes.

For most adults, between 60-100 beats per minute is normal. Heart rate can be affected by stress, anxiety, hormones, medication and how physically active you are. Talk to your doctor about what a normal heart rate is for you.

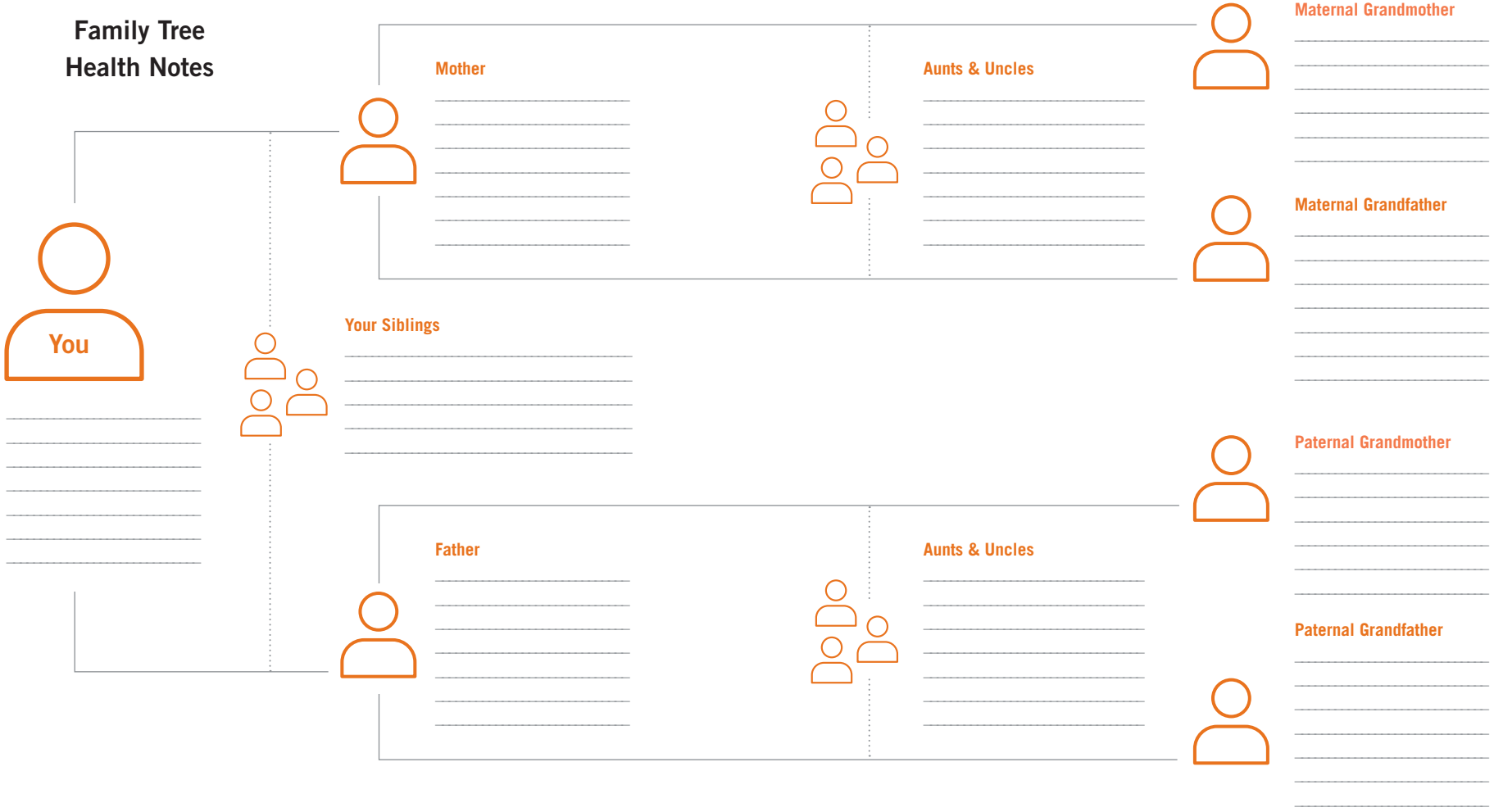
Source: American Heart Association

Know Your Family History

Having the facts about heart disease among your family members can help you and your doctor better understand your own risk for heart disease.

Use this space to record information about your parents, siblings, grandparents, and aunts and uncles. Make a note of your relationship to the person, their ethnicity and race, cause of death if deceased and as much of their health history as you know.

Family Tree Health Notes



Inspire

There are steps, both small and large, that each of us can take every day to improve our heart health. Knowing where to start is often the hardest part. Let us partner with you and show you the way!

Take Charge of Your Heart Health

If you have set a goal of improving your heart health, know that even small changes in what you eat and how active you are can add up to a big difference.

Set goals and track your progress. Your success will motivate you to keep going!

Inspire Strategies

In this section, you will find strategies to help you take charge of your heart health. They are divided into categories:

What to eat

Get moving

Stop smoking

Manage stress

Get enough sleep

Try to make one or two small changes in each category to start. By starting small, you are more likely to be successful. Be kind to yourself and know that no one is perfect.

What to Eat: Heart Healthy Eating Patterns

Heart healthy eating patterns can improve cardiovascular health and reduce cardiovascular risk. Focus on your overall dietary pattern and not on individual foods. Heart healthy eating patterns include a balance of nutrients and a variety and combination of foods and beverages.

No food groups should be avoided. There is no evidence to support any one popular or fad diet. It is important to begin heart healthy eating patterns early in life since cardiovascular disease begins during fetal development and early childhood.

A new analysis from the American Heart Association found that following a heart healthy eating pattern can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. Heart healthy dietary patterns include Mediterranean diet, Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) and healthy vegetarian diets.

What does a heart healthy eating pattern include?

- A daily variety of fresh fruits and vegetables – try to include all the colors of the rainbow
- Foods made from mostly whole grains
- Healthy protein sources
- Mostly plant-based protein sources (beans, legumes, nuts)
  - Fish and seafood at least twice a week
  - Low-fat dairy or fat-free dairy products
  - Lean cuts of meat or poultry if desired
- Liquid plant oils (soybean, canola, olive oil) instead of hard, solid fats
- Foods prepared with little or no salt
- Adjusting calorie intake and physical activity to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Minimize or avoid:

- Foods and beverages with added sugar
- Heavily processed foods
- Saturated fats and trans (partially-hydrogenated) fats
- Red meats and processed meats
- Full-fat dairy products
- Tropical fats and oils (coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils)
- Foods made from refined grains (white flour items)
- Alcoholic beverages

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Health benefits of a heart healthy eating pattern:

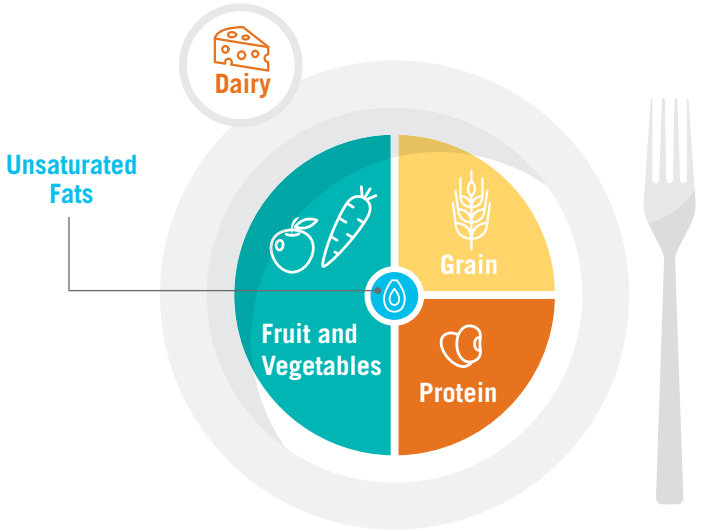
- Lower risk of cardiovascular disease
- Decrease risk of age-related cognitive decline and Alzheimer's Disease
- Promote healthy kidneys
- Provide essential nutrients for optimal health
- Lower risk of becoming overweight or obesity
- Promote optimal blood pressure control
- Lower risk of metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes

What should my heart healthy plate look like?

- Non-fat or low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt with little or no added sugar
- Whole wheat bread, pasta, cereal and crackers, buckwheat, faro, quinoa, brown rice, bulgur, millet, oatmeal, barley with little or no added sugar and salt
- Polyunsaturated fats – soybean, corn, safflower, sunflower oils, walnuts, flax seeds
- Monounsaturated fats – canola and olive oil, nuts, avocado *These unsaturated fats help to reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.
- Select mostly plant-based proteins such as beans, legumes, nuts. Lean cuts of poultry and meats with little or no added salt if desired. Fish and seafood at least twice a week.

Heart Healthy Plate

Fill half of your plate with mostly fresh vegetables and fruit in all the colors of the rainbow. Frozen, canned or dried fruit and vegetable without added salt and sugar can be incorporated.



* Lichtenstein, A. H. (2021, December 7). 2021 Dietary Guidance to Improve Cardiovascular Health: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association. Circulation, 144(23), e472-e487.

Get Moving

Adding regular movement and physical activity to your life will not only reduce your risk for heart disease, you will also notice a difference in how great you feel.

Among the benefits of regular physical activity:

- Improves heart and lung function
- Helps you lose weight or maintain a healthy weight
- Improves balance, muscle tone and joint flexibility
- Relieves stress and tension and improves your mood
- Reduces your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and diabetes

Aim to get between 30-60 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. If it's easier, you can get your activity in shorter increments throughout the day.

Types of Physical Activity

There are three primary types of physical activity. A combination of all three is best.

1 Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise uses the large muscles in your body, causing you to breathe faster and more deeply, increasing the amount of oxygen in your blood. Aerobic activity also makes your heart beat fast, so more blood flows to your muscles and back to your lungs.

During aerobic exercise, you should be working hard enough that you can't comfortably carry a conversation. Vigorous walking is a good aerobic choice for beginners.

Engage in 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity.

2 Strength Training

Strength training builds strong muscles and bones. You can use free weights, strength-training machines or your own body weight. Strength training exercises include push-ups, lunges, squats and sit-ups.

Aim to strength train at least two day per week.

3 Flexibility Training

Stretching exercises increase your flexibility by lengthening muscles. Flexibility is vital for balance and for joint health. Stretching before and after exercise also helps prevent injuries.

Talk to your doctor before beginning a physical activity if you:

- **Have not been active recently**
- **Have health problems, such as high blood pressure**
- **Are pregnant**
- **Are over 60**

Stop Smoking

If you smoke, the single best thing you can do to improve the length and the quality of your life is to quit — now. Smoking is the #1 cause of preventable death in the U.S., causing a variety of deadly illnesses, including heart disease and stroke. The good news is it's never too late to quit!

The nicotine in cigarettes is highly addictive. This makes quitting not easy. You may have to make several attempts at quitting before you succeed. The important thing is to keep trying.

Strategies to Quit Successfully

- Gradually reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke. Try smoking only part of each cigarette each time, limiting when or where you smoke, or switching to a brand you like less.
- Start getting rid of ashtrays and lighters and clean everything that smells of smoke.
- Find a buddy who also wants to quit.
- Start exercising.

As soon as you quit smoking, you will immediately reap the benefits. The positive effects will continue to accumulate over time, too!

Although many people quit on their own, some need help. Consider talking to your doctor about treatment options, including nicotine replacement products, medications and counseling or behavior therapy.

- Keep track of why you smoke so you can avoid triggers.
- Make a list of reasons why you want to quit and read it daily.
- Pick a date to quit and slowly reduce your smoking leading up to that day. Then, stop completely.

You will experience withdrawal symptoms, such as anger, irritability and cravings. Anticipate and prepare for these side effects by creating distractions such as exercise and breathing exercises. Reward yourself daily and weekly for your success. Each day, week and month without smoking is another investment in your health!

Health Benefits of Quitting Smoking

Within 20 minutes of quitting smoking, your blood pressure decreases.

Within 48 hours, your nerve endings will generate and your smell and taste will improve.

Within one year, your risk of heart disease is CUT IN HALF.

Within five years, your stroke risk may be reduced to that of someone who has never smoked.

Manage Your Stress

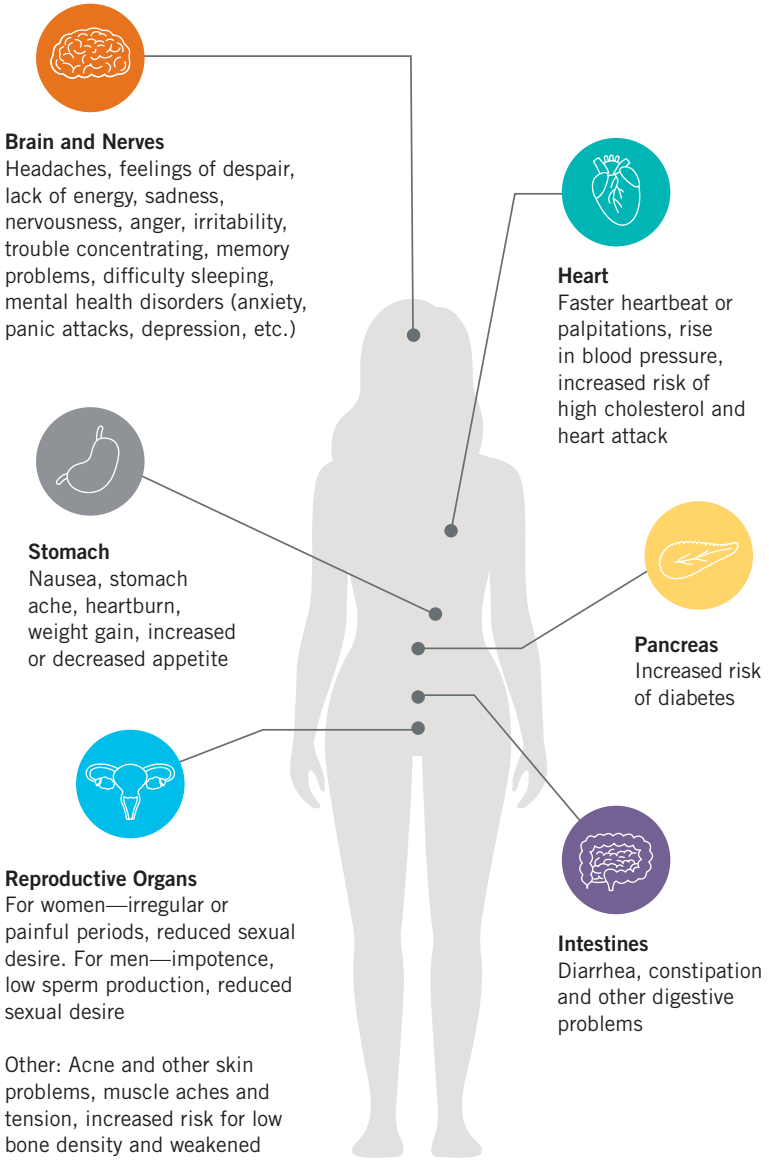
The effects of stress on our health can be profound. Left unmanaged, stress takes a toll on your body and may cause significant health problems, including heart disease.

Physical signs of stress may include:

- Feeling nervous, sad or angry
- Fast, pounding heartbeat
- Difficulty breathing
- Sweating
- Pain or tense muscles in neck, shoulders, back, jaw or face
- Headaches
- Feeling tired or trouble sleeping
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Upset stomach, lack of appetite or weight loss or gain

Studies show that experiencing positive emotions, including happiness, joy, contentment and enthusiasm, may reduce your risk of heart disease.

How Stress Affects Your Body



Sleep for Success

Getting enough sleep is vital to good health. Our sleep needs vary throughout our lives, but adults should generally get between 7-9 hours of sleep every night.

If you aren't getting enough sleep, here are some tips to help you succeed at sleeping!

- **Track your sleep.** Use a sleep diary to record your sleep patterns and habits and then chart your improvement. (See sleep diary on Page 54.)
- **Don't go to bed too hungry or too full.** Eat a light meal 2–3 hours prior to going to bed.
- **Use calming scents** such as lavender in oils, diffusers or lotions.
- **Keep your bed room comfortable**, cool, and dark. Dim the lights as you wind down. Use blackened curtains or blinds.
- **Remove electronics from the bedroom** and stop using at least 1 hour prior to going to bed. Blue lights prevent the natural production of melatonin (chemical that tells the brain that it is time to sleep).
- **Reduce noise** by using a fan or sound machine.

Avoid stimulants like coffee, tea, alcohol and nicotine before bed.

National Sleep Foundation Sleep Diary

Complete in Morning

	I went to bed last night at:	I got out of bed this morning at:	Last night, I fell asleep in:	I woke up during the night: *(record the number of times):*	When I woke up for the day I felt: *(check one):*	Last night, I slept a total of: *(record number of hours)*	My sleep was disturbed by: *(list any mental, emotional, physical or environmental factors that affected your sleep; e.g. stress, snoring, physical discomfort, temperature)*
DAY 1 Day_____ Date_____	____PM/AM	____PM/AM	___Minutes	____Times	❑ Refreshed ❑ Somewhat Refreshed ❑ Fatigued	____Hours	
DAY 2 Day_____ Date_____	____PM/AM	____PM/AM	___Minutes	____Times	❑ Refreshed ❑ Somewhat Refreshed ❑ Fatigued	____Hours	
DAY 3 Day_____ Date_____	____PM/AM	____PM/AM	___Minutes	____Times	❑ Refreshed ❑ Somewhat Refreshed ❑ Fatigued	____Hours	
DAY 4 Day_____ Date_____	____PM/AM	____PM/AM	___Minutes	____Times	❑ Refreshed ❑ Somewhat Refreshed ❑ Fatigued	____Hours	
DAY 5 Day_____ Date_____	____PM/AM	____PM/AM	___Minutes	____Times	❑ Refreshed ❑ Somewhat Refreshed ❑ Fatigued	____Hours	
DAY 6 Day_____ Date_____	____PM/AM	____PM/AM	___Minutes	____Times	❑ Refreshed ❑ Somewhat Refreshed ❑ Fatigued	____Hours	
DAY 7 Day_____ Date_____	____PM/AM	____PM/AM	___Minutes	____Times	❑ Refreshed ❑ Somewhat Refreshed ❑ Fatigued	____Hours	

Find Your Heart Health Success Formula!

We hope the information in this booklet helped Educate, Motivate and Inspire your path to better heart health.

Below are our top quick tips to improve your heart health. When in doubt, refer back to this list.

- ❑ Minimize stress.
- ❑ Sleep 8 hours every night.
- ❑ Stop using tobacco (or never start).
- ❑ Move for at least 30 minutes, 4-6 times per week.
- ❑ Eat a healthy diet.
- ❑ Maintain a healthy blood pressure at or below 120/80 mmHg.
- ❑ Maintain healthy cholesterol levels.
- ❑ Know and track your heart health numbers.
- ❑ Know your family history.
- ❑ Stay up-to-date on preventive care, including check-ups and screenings.

Congratulations on taking steps to improve your heart health!

Set Your Goals

Now it's your turn to set your own goals. Decide where you can make improvements and the steps you need to take to achieve that change. Share these goals with your doctor and check in with yourself regularly to track your progress.

GOAL 1 _____

Steps Needed to Achieve this Goal

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

GOAL 2 _____

Steps Needed to Achieve this Goal

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

GOAL 3 _____

Steps Needed to Achieve this Goal

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

GOAL 4 _____

Steps Needed to Achieve this Goal

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Notes

Contact Us

If you took our screening assessment on page 32 and checked at least one box, or if you simply want to understand your heart health better, you could benefit from a comprehensive cardiac risk screening assessment. Please contact us at our women's heart health clinic to schedule an appointment to help you determine your heart disease risk and obtain specialized information on how to decrease your risk.

To contact Dignity Health Heart and Vascular Institute's Women's Heart Program, call 916.453.4768 or fax 916.733.6977.

Dignity Health.

Heart and Vascular Institute
of Greater Sacramento

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