



READ TIME:
3 MINUTES

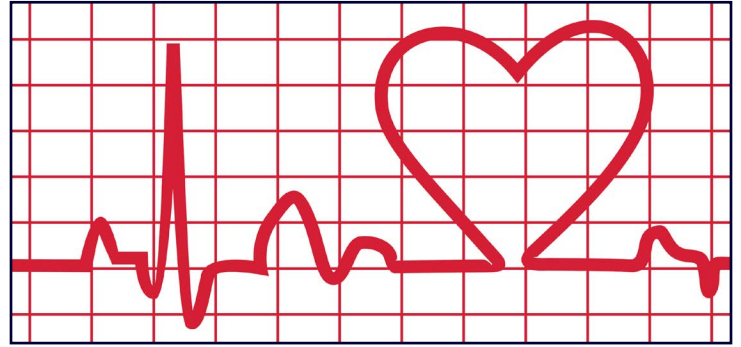


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Six Strategies to a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle

By Christina A. Worthington

Did you know that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States? Heart disease and the conditions that it encompasses, takes the lives of 1 in 4 Americans each year. But, when you choose healthy behaviors, you can lower your heart disease risk while also preventing other serious chronic conditions like Type 2 diabetes and some kinds of cancer. These six strategies can help you live a heart-healthy lifestyle!



Learn Your Health History

Not all “risk factors” of heart disease are in your control. Genetics play an active part in your health. Talk to family members about your family health history. Follow up with your medical provider about health concerns derived from those conversations.

Eat a Healthy Diet

Choose healthy meals and snacks to help prevent heart disease and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as high-fiber and low-sodium options, and fewer processed foods.

Move More, Sit Less

Regular physical activity helps improve your overall health, fitness, and quality of life. Not only will it help reduce your risk of heart disease, but also feelings of depression and anxiety. Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week, plus muscle-strengthening activities at least two days a week.

Quit Smoking

Smoking is a major cause of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and causes one of every three deaths from CVD. Each University of Illinois System campus - [Urbana-Champaign](#), [Chicago](#), and [Springfield](#) - has tobacco cessation resources available to employees.

Take Medication as Directed

If you take medicine to treat high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, follow your doctor’s instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don’t understand something. Never stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Rethink Your Drink

Start your day by drinking a large glass of water and continue to drink water throughout the day! Substitute water for sugary drinks to reduce calories. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation as alcohol naturally raises blood pressure.

For more information on living a heart-healthy lifestyle, please visit the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s website](#). ■