

Matters of the Heart - Keeping a Healthy Heart

Healthy Heart

Healthy You

This month is to raise your awareness on heart matters. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the U.S., with stroke moving up according to the American Heart Association's 2026 statistics. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) can refer to many conditions: Heart disease, heart attack, and stroke to name a few. **Heart disease:** It includes numerous problems, many of which are related to atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis develops when a substance called plaque builds up in the walls of the arteries. If a blood clot forms, it can block the blood flow. This can cause a heart attack or stroke. **Heart attack:** occurs when the blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked by a blood clot. If this clot completely cuts off the blood flow, the part of the heart muscle supplied by that artery begins to die. **Stroke:** There are two common strokes: ischemic and hemorrhagic. An ischemic stroke is the most common type of stroke. It occurs when a blood vessel that feeds the brain gets blocked, usually from a blood clot. When the blood supply to a part of the brain is cut off, some brain cells begin to die. A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel within the brain bursts. This is most often caused by uncontrolled high blood pressure. Taking care of your heart's health has never been more important, and there's a lot you can do to prevent heart disease. Below are a few healthy lifestyle choices you can incorporate to lower your risk of heart disease.

- Be active. Commit to a walking schedule with a friend or family member. Stay at a healthy weight.
- Eat healthy foods
- If you smoke, vape, or use other tobacco or nicotine products, try to quit.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Get a healthy amount of sleep at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Seeing your doctor regularly and getting screening tests is important.

Often, the earlier a disease is diagnosed, the more likely it is that it can be cured or successfully managed. When you treat a disease early, you may be able to prevent or delay problems from the disease. Regular screening tests and checkups can help you stay healthy. Talk with your doctor whenever you have concerns about your health.

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