



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

10 Tips for a Healthier Heart

- Get heart healthy during American Heart Month! Being active and finding a group to help keep you accountable can help improve your health and potentially avoid heart disease.
- Being physically active every day is fun and can improve the function of your heart. Plan and schedule opportunities for active play; for example, include a brisk 10-minute trip around the block after meals or a 10-minute walking break during the day.
- Cut back on salt little by little—and pay attention to the natural tastes of various foods. Your taste for salt will lessen over time. Additionally, keep salt off the kitchen counter and the dinner table and substitute spices, herbs, garlic, vinegar or lemon juice to season foods.
- Take a Snooze! Lack of sleep has been associated with elevated cholesterol and blood pressure. Adults need at least seven, but no more than nine hours of sleep at night to aid with the prevention of heart disease. Children need 10-12 hours of sleep per night.
- Develop bedtime routines for the whole family to assist with falling asleep faster and staying asleep.
- Makeover your family's favorite recipes by reducing the amount of salt and saturated fat and substituting a lower fat food without sacrificing taste. For example, use low-fat yogurt instead of sour cream and skip the seasoning packet and use pepper and olive oil instead.
- Read food labels to learn more about what is in the package, select foods that have less than 1,000 mg of sodium per serving.
- According to the CDC, lowering or maintaining normal blood pressure can greatly reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke.
- According to the American Heart Association, nearly 1 in 3 adults (about 80 million people) has high blood pressure and more than half of them don't have it under control. To help, start self-monitoring your blood pressure and know the numbers.
- Most of the sodium Americans eat is found in processed foods. Eat highly processed foods less often and in smaller portions—especially cheesy foods, such as pizza; cured meats, such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and deli/luncheon meats; and ready-to-eat foods, like canned chili, ravioli and soups. Fresh foods are generally lower in sodium.



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