



Heart
Health

Quit Smoking

Smoking is one of the most harmful things you can do to your body. Quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health.

If you or a loved one is trying to quit smoking, here is some helpful guidance and tips from Health.gov.

CAN I QUIT?

You are not the only person to begin quitting smoking for good. There are millions of people who have successfully quit smoking, some after countless years. To quit smoking you must first know how it is affecting you or your loved ones.

Nicotine is the addictive drug found in tobacco products. The nicotine in cigarettes is what causes strong urges to smoke.

To help motivate you, use some of these tips to help you according to Health.gov:

- Make a list of reasons to quit.
- Ask family or friends for support.
- Talk to your doctor about counseling or medicines that may help you quit.

HEALTH BENEFITS

You will feel the benefits of smoking as soon as you stop smoking. You will breathe easier, your sense of taste and smell will improve and you'll find yourself having more energy throughout the day.

Your lungs and body will feel

stronger once you've quit smoking.

Quitting smoking also will help you live a longer, healthier life. Once you've quit smoking, your risk of having a heart attack or stroke vastly goes down when paired with a healthy diet and exercise.

Quitting smoking will also

help you lose or gain weight according to what you want. You're more likely to begin other life-changing activities once you've quit smoking, such as working and eating better.

DOES SMOKING AFFECT OTHERS?

Secondhand smoke is

defined by Health.gov as the mix of smoke that comes from your cigarette and the smoke that you breathe. Secondhand smoking is very dangerous for you and others around you.

According to Health.gov, in babies and children, secondhand smoking can cause:

- Sudden infant death syndrome.
- Pneumonia.
- Bronchitis.
- Severe asthma attacks.
- Ear infections.

Smoking can also cause heart disease, stroke and lung cancer in adults breathing in secondhand smoke.



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Get Active for Heart Health

Becoming active is a great way to get your heart health, physical and mental health in line.

You don't have to be an Olympic athlete to lead a healthy, active lifestyle. Health.gov says to aim for at least two and a half hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. Here are some heart-promoting physical activity tips that you should know.

START SLOW

Start slow with new activities and do more as time goes on and your confi-

dence builds up.

Workouts don't have to include lifting weights in the gym or running around a track. Your activities can be something you and your family enjoy doing together.

There are plenty of activities you can have fun doing while you are getting your much needed physical activity. Here are some to name a few from Health.gov:

- Go for a brisk walk around the neighborhood or mall.
- Ride a bike to work or around your neighborhood or park.
- Do push-ups during commercial breaks while watching TV.

Remember to have fun with your workouts. The more you dread working out, the easier it will be for you to stop working out. Make your physical activity something you can do with your family or friends. If you are a person that can handle intense activity such as basketball or soccer, then do so. Always remember to pace yourself and be care-

ful to not hurt yourself.

EXERCISE TO BUILD MUSCLES

Health.gov recommends doing muscle-strengthening activities at least two days a week. This can include chores or honey-dos. Activities such as heavy gardening, like digging or shoveling, or doing push-ups are great activities.

Practicing squats is another muscle building workout that you can perform at home. Set a chair under yourself and place your hands crossed on your shoulders and squat up and down onto the chair.



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Heart Healthy Shopping List

If you are having trouble trying to figure out what foods to eat and what food groups to look for when shopping at the grocery store, here are some tips from Health.gov.

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

Try to eat a variety of vegetables and fruits. You can buy vegetables and fruits fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Here is a list of specific vegetables and fruits you can consume that will help the health of your heart, according to Health.gov:

- Fresh vegetables such as tomatoes, cabbage and carrots.
- Leafy greens for salads, like romaine lettuce, spinach and kale.
- Canned vegetables that are low in sodium.
- Frozen vegetables without added butter or sauces, like broccoli, cauli-

flower or peas.

- Fresh fruits such as apples, oranges, bananas, pears and peaches.
- Canned, frozen or dried fruit without added sugars.

Local farmers markets are great places to find fresh vegetables and fruits in your area. Search through local listings to see when and where the closest farmers market is.

DAIRY

The best heart healthy dairy products are fat-free or low-fat options. Search for these kinds of products

listed below.

- Fat-free or low fat (1%) milk.
- Fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt.
- Fat-free or low-fat cheese.

GRAINS

When searching for breads, cereals and other foods that contain grains, be sure you see whole wheat or another type of grain listed in the ingredient list.

Look for products that say 100% whole grain. Here are some examples of products from Health.gov:

- Whole-grain bread, bagels English muffins and tortillas.

- Whole-grain hot or cold breakfast cereals with no added sugars.

- Whole grain rices such as brown or wild rice, quinoa or oats.

- Whole-wheat or whole grain pasta and couscous.

PROTEINS

Proteins such as seafood, poultry and lean beef are all good proteins that promote a healthy heart. Other proteins that are very good for you are beans and peas, eggs and tofu. These foods paired with the others above will promote a healthy heart and diet.

Reducing Risk of Stroke

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will also help you reduce the risk of stroke. Health.gov shares information on what a stroke is and what you can do to reduce the risk of you or a loved one having a stroke.

WHAT IS A STROKE?

Health.gov defines a stroke — sometimes called a “brain attack” — as when blood flow to part of the brain is blocked, which can hurt or kill cells in the brain. Strokes are the leading cause of death in adults.

Strokes can cause lifelong damage such as:

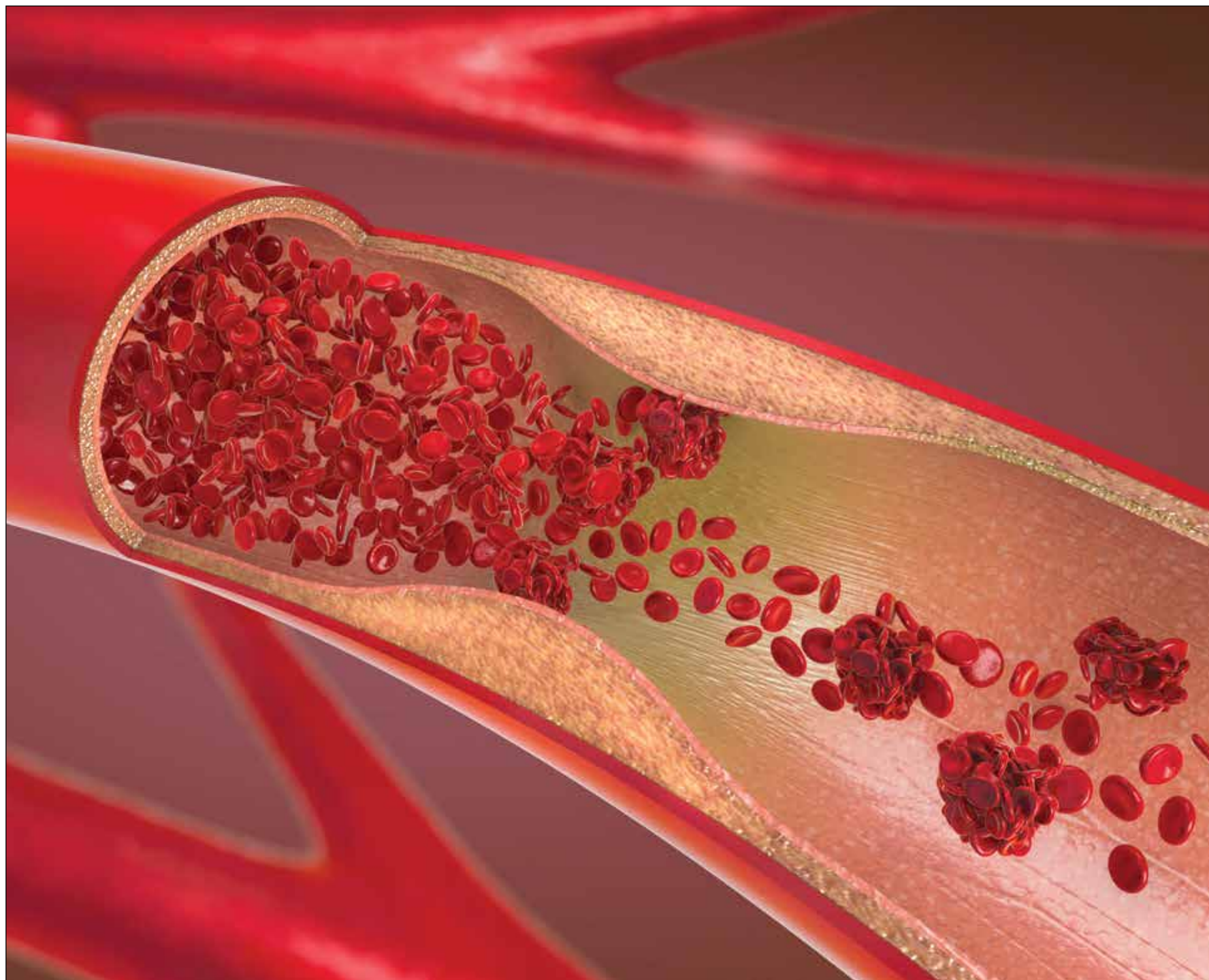
- Trouble thinking and speaking.
- Paralysis
- Trouble controlling or expressing emotions.

ARE YOU AT RISK?

If you are afraid you are at risk of having a stroke, here is what Health.gov says are the biggest risk factors.

The number one risk factor for stroke is high blood pressure. There are no signs or symptoms for high blood pressure, so Health.gov stresses the importance to get your high blood pressure checked regularly.

Talk to your doctor about how often to check your



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blood pressure and whether measuring at home is right for you.

Other risk factors for stroke are smoking, drinking too much alcohol, use of illegal drugs, diabetes and high cholesterol, to name a few.

SIGNS

Strokes usually happen unexpectedly and with little to no warning. Health.gov shares signs you can watch for:

- Sudden dizziness, loss of balance or trouble walking.
- Sudden confusion, trouble

speaking or trouble understanding.

- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg. Especially on one side of the body.

- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

If you or someone in your family has a stroke, call 911 right away. The chances of you or your loved surviving and recovering depends on how fast emergency help arrives.

Stress Management

Everyone experiences stress. Frequent stress can cause strain on your body and brain and make it impossible to function. Finding effective ways to deal with your stress is crucial for the health of your heart.

HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOU

According to The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), stress can have the following affects on your body:

- Headaches .
- Trouble sleeping.
- Jaw pain.
- Changes in appetite.
- Frequent mood swings.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Feeling overwhelmed.

Stress affects your mental and physical health, including your heart. Too much stress can cause heart disease, depression and high blood pressure.



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FIND YOUR TRIGGERS

Learning to deal with stress is essential to your health. NAMI shares tips and methods you could use in everyday life to help you manage your stress level and take control of your health.

One of the first steps to managing your stress is to figure out what triggers your

stress. What situations make you feel physically or mentally uncomfortable? The battle to control your stress will become easier as soon as you figure out the cause.

FIND METHODS THAT HELP

Learn and find out what may help you when you are

stressed. There is not one secure method of dealing with stress that works better than others. Each person is different and the triggers that cause their stress may be different. Experiment with different things to see what best fits your lifestyle and what you're comfortable with. Here are some ideas on methods to

help you cope and stay calm.

- Exercising is one of the most effective ways people can combat stress. Putting physical stress on your body can help to relieve mental stress. Exercising helps by lowering your body's stress hormones and helping to improve your sleep quality, and it helps lower stress by

boosting your confidence, which in turn will improve your mental wellbeing.

- Practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and meditation are good ways to relax your body. Practice by taking a step away from whatever you're doing and taking 10 seconds to close your eyes and focus on deep breathing.



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Basic Heart Health Tips

As you get older your risk for heart disease increases. You need to take big steps to actively monitor your health and change your lifestyle to a healthier one.

Health.gov shares basic heart health tips to help you and your loved ones lower your risk for heart disease.

EAT HEALTHY

Changing your diet can be one of the most difficult ways to lower your

risk of heart disease — difficult because you may be accustomed to eating certain foods and certain spices on your foods for years. As you get older these foods can be a danger to your life paired with stress and sleep habits.

Start by eating the right foods. A heart-healthy diet is low in saturated and trans fats, added sugars and sodium. Heart-healthy foods are high in fiber, such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables. You can find all these types of foods at your local grocery stores.

GET ACTIVE

Becoming more active can also help

to lower your risk for heart disease. You don't have to become a professional weight lifter to create a healthier lifestyle. Health.gov says adults need at least two and a half hours of moderate aerobic activity each week. This can include fast walking, dancing and biking.

Begin by working out for at least 10-20 minutes a day. Increase the time as you adjust your schedule and your body to physical activity.

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY HABITS

Take a look at your life and monitor what unhealthy habits may cause heart problems in the future. Break

away from habits such as smoking, alcohol or stress.

Quitting smoking helps lower your risk of heart disease and heart attack. Secondhand smoking can be just as harmful to you as well. Ask guests to smoke outside and try to avoid being around people that will smoke without considering your health.

Drink alcohol in moderation and manage stress properly. Stress is one of the leading causes of heart disease, depression and high blood pressure.

Practicing deep breathing techniques and meditation are good ways to manage your stress and relax yourself.

Sleep and the Heart

One of the best ways to protect your heart and your health is to sleep well at night.

Just because your body is able to operate on six to seven hours, doesn't mean it's necessarily healthy for you to do so.

Sleep is essential for the performance of your body and the effect that sleep has on your heart. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Helpguide.org share guidance on how to maintain a happy and healthy heart.

QUALITY AND QUANTITY

According to the CDC, the average adult needs at least seven hours of sleep each night. More than one in three American adults say they don't get the recommended amount.

Adults who sleep less than seven hours each night are more likely to say they have other health problems. Health problems associated with sleep issues are high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and obesity.

You may not feel the effects of lack of sleep instantly, but over time, not getting good sleep will hurt your heart health.

Lack of sleep can also affect your mental and physical health. According to Healthguide.org, sleep impacts productivity, emotional balance, immune function and even your weight.



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SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Do you find yourself yawning through the day, clinging to a few cups of coffee to make it through work? You may think it's common for everyone, but the truth is you may not realize how sleep deprived you are. Signs of sleep deprivation are less obvious than you may think. If you are wondering if you are sleep deprived, here

are some signs according to Helpguide.org:

- You need an alarm clock to wake up on time.
- You have a hard time getting out of the bed in the morning.
- You feel sluggish in the afternoon.
- You get sleepy in lectures, meetings or warm rooms.
- You get drowsy after heavy

meals or while driving.

- You need to nap to get through the day.

GETTING BETTER SLEEP

The CDC shares tips on how to get better good quality sleep:

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning.

- Get enough natural light, especially earlier in the day. Try going for a morning or lunch-time walk.

- Get enough physical activity during the day, but don't exercise within a few hours of bedtime.

- Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet.

Applying these tips will help you get better sleep.