

# Top 5 Measures to Prevent Heart Disease



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High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity,

cigarette smoking, and physical inactivity are among the leading causes of cardiovascular disease. Although heart disease is the #1 killer in the United States, there are many things you can do to lessen your risk. **Taking preventative measures is the best defense against heart disease.**

## Top 5 Measures to Prevent Heart Disease

### 1. Exercise

Your muscles may get small and weak without regular exercise. Your heart, like every other muscle in your body, needs exercise to stay strong and fit. As your cardiovascular capacity increases, your heart becomes slightly larger. A larger heart can pump out more blood per beat, allowing it to pump out a proper volume at a lower rate. Studies have shown that frequent aerobic physical activity, as little as 30 minutes daily, can help reduce blood pressure and control the amount of LDL cholesterol in your blood.

### 2. Mind Your Cholesterol

Your liver makes all the cholesterol your body needs. We get excess cholesterol in our diets from animal products: milk, eggs and meat. When too much cholesterol accumulates in your blood, it starts to stick to your arterial walls, causing a buildup that may become so severe that blood will not be able to pass through, causing a condition called atherosclerosis. Limit the amount of LDL cholesterol by cutting out

excess dairy, egg yolks, and fatty meat. Not all cholesterol is bad: HDL cholesterol has the opposite effect on arteries. Be sure to increase HDL cholesterol levels by adding fruits, nuts, vegetables and whole grains to your diet.

### 3. Omega-3

The unsaturated fat found in oily fish is called Omega-3 Fatty Acids. Studies have shown that these fatty acids decrease the risk of stroke, lower blood pressure, reduce blood clotting, and lessen the instance of sudden cardiac arrest. Eating 1-2 servings per week of fish could reduce your risk of heart disease by 1/3<sup>rd</sup>. Omega-3 Fatty Acids can also be found in walnuts, flaxseed, avocados, and olive oil

### 4. Unwind

Stress affects everybody, and its contributions are everywhere: work overload, financial concerns, family planning, crowded areas, traffic, holidays, and other daily aggravations. Depending on how you react to stressors can determine an unhealthy rise blood pressure and heart rate, as well as release of excess cortisol and adrenaline. Stress relief tactics can include massage therapy and acupuncture, which have not only been proven to lower blood pressure and heart rate, but also increase blood flow to the heart and release endorphins and serotonin, two major stress relieving hormones.

### 5. Stop smoking

According to the American Heart Association, cigarette smoking is the most significant preventable cause of premature death in the United States. Smoking increases the chances of cardiovascular disease by more than 50%. Habitual smokers have higher blood pressure, higher heart rate, a decrease in the amount of oxygen flow to the heart, an increased chance of blood clots, and damage to the arterial walls.

To sum up, get at least 30 minutes of cardio 5 days a week, cut animal fats out of your diet, eat plenty of fish, quit smoking, and relax. These 5 simple adjustments can realistically save your life.

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