

RESULTS FOR LIFE

Monthly tips and topics for a healthier lifestyle

Healthy Heart Hints



Every year since 1964, February has been designated as American Heart Month. President Lyndon Johnson made this proclamation in 1963 to raise public awareness that cardiovascular disease was the leading cause of death. Currently, about 84 million American adults suffer from some form of cardiovascular disease and it is still the number one cause of death in both American men and women. Cardiovascular disease refers to any condition that negatively affects the heart's ability to efficiently pump and transport blood throughout the body. Common examples of cardiovascular disease include: plaque buildup and stiffening of the arteries, abnormal heart rhythms, heart failure, heart valve problems, heart attack, and stroke.

Cardiovascular disease is a lifelong condition. Procedures such as angioplasty and bypass surgery can help blood and oxygen flow more easily to the heart to decrease risk of cardiovascular events. Nevertheless, the arteries remain damaged, which increases the risk of a heart attack. What's more, the condition of the blood vessels will steadily worsen unless changes of daily habits are made to control risk factors. Because so many people die of complications from heart disease, or become permanently disabled, it is vital to take action to prevent this disease.

Healthy lifestyle choices often prevent the development of cardiovascular disease and help many people with heart disease enjoy full and happy lives. See some Heart Healthy Hints for making positive lifestyle choices below!

- **Give up tobacco products!** Smoking destroys the lungs' ability to absorb fresh oxygen, thereby depleting the heart and body. Smoking is responsible for 443,000 premature deaths each year, with approximately 1/3 linked to heart disease. Secondhand smoke exposure will cause an additional 49,000 deaths this year. Cigar smoking, even if you don't inhale the smoke, and some forms of smokeless tobacco may also increase risk of heart disease. Help yourself and your loved ones this year by giving up the tobacco products and living a healthier lifestyle! Take advantage of Interactive Health's Tobacco Free health coaching program or

Fit Tip of the Month

Stay Fit for Optimal Health



Consistent exercise is one of the most important aspects of staying (or becoming) fit and healthy. Our bodies are unable to recover as well if we are unfit. So to be in optimal health, we recommend a balanced workout plan that includes strength (at least two times/week), cardiovascular (at least 3 times/week), and flexibility training (every day if possible, but at least 3 times/week). Here are some tips to ensure greater success on the road to getting and staying fit:

1) Find the Time

- Schedule your exercise as you would important appointments or commitments.
- If you can't spend a full 30 minutes exercising, try 10 minute chunks of exercise instead.
- Build exercise into your daily routine like on your commute to work, during lunch, or as a post dinner activity with your family.

2) Make it a Habit

- Find activities that you enjoy.
- Lay out your workout clothes the night before.
- Utilize technology like a fitness tracking wearable device, pedometer, or a free app on your phone that you can set to remind you to get up and move once an hour.
- Don't give up - it typically takes between 20 and 30 days to make a habit stick.

national quit programs.

- **Know your genetics.** Heart disease is often a hereditary trait and is something that everyone should understand. If cardiovascular disease runs in your family, it is even more important to make better decisions to live a heart-healthy life.
- **Beat high blood pressure.** High blood pressure is often a silent killer because it does not always produce symptoms. If you know you have high blood pressure, or you know it runs in your family, there are things you can do to help bring it back down to healthy levels. Being active, eating a more nutritious diet, and maintaining a healthy weight are all ways you can decrease your risk for high blood pressure that may lead to a heart attack or stroke.
- **Get active!** Exercise has been proven to make the heart and lungs stronger and more efficient. A sedentary lifestyle can cause the heart to lose strength and contribute to plaque buildup in the arteries, which could lead to heart disease. Stay active to decrease your risks of cardiovascular disease.
- **Eat a well-balanced diet.** A diet that is high in unhealthy (trans or saturated) fats, added sugar, and sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and unhealthy weight gain; all of which can lead to heart disease. Instead, choose a well-balanced diet with more fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats instead of processed foods.
- **Control cholesterol.** High cholesterol can narrow and clog your arteries which can lead to blockages that cause a heart attack or stroke. While family history plays a large role in cholesterol, focusing on the controllable risk factors will help you improve your lifestyle. Learn how to control your cholesterol by eating a well-balanced diet and living a heart-healthy lifestyle!
- **Aim for a Healthy Weight.** If you are overweight or obese, losing weight will directly lower your risk of developing heart disease. Weight loss can also help reduce a number of other risk factors for heart disease and lower your risk of other serious conditions. Weight loss can help control diabetes, as well as reduce high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. Reaching a healthy weight can also help you achieve a better quality of sleep, experience less pain from arthritis, and increase energy. Successful, lasting weight loss requires a lifestyle change, not a brief effort to drop pounds quickly. Aim to lose between 0.5 to 2 pounds per week, any quicker and you may lose muscle mass that keeps your metabolism boosted. Select a realistic weight goal for yourself to help you stay on track! If you have a lot of weight to lose, speak to your health care provider or a Registered Dietitian to help you develop a sensible plan for gradual weight loss.

**Alexandra Turnbough, BS Community Health
Healthy Activities Implementation Specialist**

Resources

[Interactive Health](#)
[American Heart Association](#)
[Center for Disease Control](#)
[National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#)

3) Get Outdoors

- The varied terrain of a road, sidewalk, or trail challenges your body in ways that a treadmill or elliptical trainer can't do.
- Studies have shown that people report enjoying outdoor exercise more than exercise indoors.

4) Be Social

- Involving others in your workout routine can make it more fun, make you more accountable, and likely push you harder than if exercising alone.
- Group exercise classes can provide new workout routines for greater challenge, personalized instruction, and encouraging motivation.
- Exercise is a great way to make new friends and makes it easier to get to the class to see them.

5) Vary your Routine

- Switch up your routine when you start to notice a plateau in fitness gains or become bored with your current program.
- Your body will respond positively by rising to the new challenge and your mind will enjoy learning a new routine.

In addition to these tips, remember that it is the little things we do each day that can add up to keep us healthy and fit. So take that extra set of stairs, choose good healthy, nutritious food, and put a little fun into every day

Resources

[Interactive Health](#)
[American Heart Association](#)

Always consult your physician before beginning this or any exercise program. For more exercises or ideas, visit

www.myinteractivehealth.com.

**Susan Toon MS, CPT,
Health Coach**

Preventive Focus: C-reactive Protein

The C-reactive protein (CRP) test is used by a health practitioner to detect inflammation. CRP is a protein made by the liver and released into the blood within a few hours after tissue injury, the start of an infection, or other cause of inflammation. The CRP test is not diagnostic of any condition, but it can be used together with signs and symptoms and other tests to evaluate an individual for an acute or chronic inflammatory condition.

This standard CRP test is not to be confused with the high-sensitivity CRP (hs-CRP) test. These are two different tests that measure CRP and each test measures a different range of CRP level in the blood for different purposes. The hs-CRP test may be done to help find out your risk of a heart attack and stroke. The results can help you and your health practitioner make decisions about how to lower your risk. The connection between hs-CRP levels and the risk of heart attack and stroke are not completely understood. High levels may mean that the lining of your arteries are inflamed. This inflammation may damage the arteries and raise your risk of a heart attack and stroke.

The standard CRP test measures markedly high levels of the protein to detect or monitor significant inflammation in an individual who is suspected of having an acute condition, such as:

- A serious bacterial infection like sepsis
- A fungal infection
- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)

The level of CRP in the blood is normally low. If the CRP level is initially elevated and drops, it means that the inflammation or infection is subsiding and/or responding to treatment.

CRP levels can be elevated in the later stages of pregnancy as well as with use of birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy (i.e., estrogen). Higher levels of CRP have also been observed in people who are obese. It is always important to review these results along with a comprehensive personal and family health history with your health care practitioner to determine your own level of risk.

Resources

[American Heart Association](#)

[Interactive Health](#)

[Healthline](#)

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Nurse Practitioner, Health Management Specialist



The Heart of the Matter: Inflammation

Inflammation is linked to many chronic diseases. Our digestive tracts act as 70-80% of our immune system to prevent foreign particles from entering our body. When our gut becomes “leaky” from unhealthy lifestyles, it promotes inflammation. This webinar will provide you with the necessary tools to put out the fire of inflammation in honor of February’s Heart Health month!

Date: Thurs., February 18, 2016
Time: 12:00pm - 12:45pm (CST)

[Register Now](#)

After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

A recorded version of the webinar will be available for viewing at a later date on the [Interactive Health](#) member website.

Recipe of the Month

Touchdown Turkey Meatballs

Did you know that this month we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Super Bowl and it's also American Heart Month? We all know that Super Bowl Sunday is not just about the game, it's about the food. Have a Heart-Healthy Super Bowl Sunday by serving a healthy version of a popular appetizer served at parties throughout the year. A healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons against heart disease. One way to help our heart is to eat leaner meats and increase our vegetable intake. By using ground turkey breast in place of ground beef in this recipe, you will save 82 calories, 10 grams of total fat, 4.5 grams of saturated fat, and gain an extra 5 grams of protein per serving. Regardless of who wins the game, you'll score points with this healthy and delicious Super Bowl recipe.

Serves 6 (5 Meatballs Per Serving)

Ingredients:

8 ounces mushrooms, chopped
 1 cup small onion, chopped
 ½ cup celery, chopped
 ½ cup red bell pepper
 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon of minced garlic
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
 ½ cup fine dry seasoned breadcrumbs
 ½ cup finely chopped Italian parsley
 ¼ cup grated Reduced Fat Parmesan cheese
 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon ground pepper
 1 pound lean ground turkey breast



Directions:

1. Finely chop mushrooms, onion, celery, red bell pepper, and garlic. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the vegetable mixture and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid has evaporated, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool for 10 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 450°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil and coat with cooking spray.
3. Add breadcrumbs, parsley, cheese, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper to the cooled vegetables; stir until combined. Add turkey and mix gently to combine (do not over mix). Form into 30 meatballs (a scant 2 tablespoons each) and place on the prepared baking sheet.
4. Bake the meatballs until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center registers 165°F, which is about 15 minutes.
5. Make Ahead Tip: Freeze baked, cooled meatballs in a single layer on a baking sheet, then transfer to an airtight container. Freeze for up to 3 months. Reheat from frozen in a 350°F oven for about 25 minutes.

Nutritional information per 5 meatball serving:

Calories: 182
 Total Fat: 5.5 grams
 Saturated Fat: 0.8 grams
 Cholesterol: 52 milligrams
 Protein: 23 grams
 Total Carbohydrates: 14 grams
 Dietary Fiber: 2 grams
 Sodium: 368 milligrams

Chef Cheryl Bell, MS, RD, LDN, CDE

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Wellness Works Hub

Stay up to date with the latest wellness news and trends with [Wellness Works Hub](#).

If you haven't visited lately, here's what you've missed:

[Ideas to Make Your Workspace a Healthier Space](#)

"You may not have total control over your workspace... but if you have even a little control, are there small things you can do to improve your health at the desk?"

[38 Ways to Help You Stop Sitting, Start Standing](#)

"We've reported regularly on the negative effects of sitting. So what are some tips to get folks out of their seats and standing more? A new study has found 38 of them."

[How to Improve Your Place of Work? Focus on Wellbeing](#)

"The [Harvard Business Review](#) asks an important question: 'How do you create a great place to work?' One way to solve the challenge? Focus more on employee wellbeing."

Interactive Health provides comprehensive wellness programs to individuals across the nation. Our worksite wellness program is designed to engage you in the management of your health through early detection and identification of risk factors. Our goal is to *measure, motivate and reward* you as you begin a journey on the pathway to better health. We create a personalized pathway that is unique to your health status. Our program provides you with the specific tools and resources you need to achieve your personal health goal.