Heart Health & Stroke Prevention

Tips to a healthy heart!

Your diet plays a very important role in your heart health. To have a healthy heart eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Choose to eat mono and poly unsaturated fats in moderation instead of unhealthy fats, like saturated and trans fats. Try including some of the following tips in your daily eating habits. Start by making small realistic changes first, because smaller changes are easier to stick to than bigger more drastic changes.

- Choose naturally low fat snacks and treats, like fruit and low fat yogurt, more often. This will help you focus on eating more of the foods that help you lower your blood cholesterol. Save the desserts and goodies for special treats once in a while.

- Choose leaner cuts of meat like the loin or round.

- Choose turkey, chicken or fish with the skin removed.

- Try to eat no more than 5 to 7 ounces of meat, poultry or fish each day.

- Choose lower fat dairy products like skim or 1% milk and low fat yogurt and cheese.

- Choose smaller portions of some high fat foods like butter, margarine or oil. If you choose to use higher fat dairy products, like cream cheese and sour cream, choose smaller amounts of those too.

- When cooking try to bake, steam, braise, stew or roast more often than frying.

- Plan your meals and snacks to include more fruits and vegetables and whole grains.

- At restaurants ask for sauces and salad dressings on the side. Eat small amounts of these extras.

- When you are served a large portion of meat, poultry or fish at a restaurant, save half to take home and eat later.

- Exercise is also helpful in keeping your heart healthy. Enjoy your favorite activities as often as you can. Start out slow and enjoy more as you get stronger.
Stroke Prevention Tips!

A stroke is the 3rd leading cause of death in the United States. A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is blocked, either by a blood clot or narrowed blood vessels. Diabetes and high blood pressure make someone have a higher risk for a stroke. Lifestyle choices such as being overweight, smoking and drinking excessively also put someone at higher risk. To reduce your risk of a stroke, try to follow these tips:

- **Control your blood pressure.** Have your blood pressure checked regularly and if needed, take measures to lower it.

- **Exercise regularly.** Exercise makes the heart stronger, improves circulation and helps with weight control.

- **Stop smoking.**

- **Eat a healthy diet.** Eating a diet full of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low in fat will aid in weight maintenance and heart health.

- **Eat fish.** Recent research has shown eating oily fish, which contain omega-3 fatty acids, reduces your risk for coronary artery disease.

- **Control your diabetes.** If you are diabetic make sure you are controlling your blood sugar. Uncontrolled blood sugar may lead to damaged blood vessels.

- **Take vitamin E supplement.** Some research has showed that by taking a vitamin E supplement you can reduce your risk of a stroke by approximately 50%. Check with your pharmacist to make sure this is okay with your conditions/medications.

How to include more fruits and vegetables into your daily diet:

1. Load soups with lots of fresh or frozen vegetables.
2. Add dark leafy greens to your sandwiches.
3. Cover homemade or store bought pizza with roasted vegetables.
4. Top oatmeal or cold cereal with fresh or frozen berries.

**You can add fruits or vegetables to almost ALL of your favorite meals!**

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DHS office, or call the URI SNAP-Ed nutrition program at 1-877-Food-URI (1-877-366-3874). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.