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Healthy Sunday Topic: Protect Your Heart

Heart disease may be a leading cause of death, but that doesn't mean you have to accept it as your fate. Although you lack the power to change some risk factors such as family history, high blood pressure, sex or age, there are some key heart disease prevention steps you can take. You can avoid heart problems in the future by adopting a healthy lifestyle today. Here are six heart disease prevention tips to get you started.



- Eat a heart healthy diet
- Exercise for 30 minutes most days of the week
- Don't smoke or use tobacco
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get enough quality sleep
- Get regular blood pressure checks and health screenings

Kevin L. Thomas, MD, F.A.C.C., Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease at Duke University Medical Center states, **“Getting plenty of physical activity, eating a healthy diet and other behaviors that strengthen your heart can have a profound effect on the way you think, how you act and what you remember. Strive to improve your overall health by adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle”**



How to Eat to Protect Your Heart



To boost your heart health, start by changing what's on your plate. Whether you're trying to prevent future heart problems, are already living with high blood pressure or high cholesterol, or have a problem like atrial fibrillation, which often results from a diet-related heart problem, making simple tweaks to your diet could have big benefits. Here are some guidelines to follow.

Believe the hype. Eating heart-healthy really does matter. One study of more than 42,000 healthy women found that those who ate a diet that emphasized vegetables, lean meats, grains, and low-fat dairy were 31% less likely to die in the next 6 years than women with unhealthy diets.

Diet - A crash diet may work if you're trying to fit into a dress by next month. But if you're trying to improve your heart health, cycling through different fad diets won't help. Focus on lean meats, vegetables, and whole grains to get long-term benefits for your heart and your waistline.

Don't gorge yourself. Overeating will cause you to gain weight, but that's not all. Studies have found that more people have heart attacks after big meals.

Eat less salt. Any type of salt increases your blood pressure. The guideline is no more than a teaspoon of salt a day. If you already have high blood pressure, you should eat even less. And it doesn't just come from the salt shaker. Up to 75% of the salt you eat comes from processed foods such as soups and frozen meals. If food comes in a can or a box, check the sodium content.

Drink in moderation. More than one drink a day for women or two for men increases your risk for heart problems. It drives up blood pressure and can trigger irregular heartbeats in people with atrial fibrillation.

REMEMBER YOUR ABC's

Arm yourself with knowledge on heart health.

Be more active.

Choose good nutrition.

For more information go to:

<https://www.heart360.org/>

<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>

Health Tip is a message from Community Health Coalition, Inc. and is written in partnership with Durham Academy of Medicine, Dentistry & Pharmacy, Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, and Duke Regional Hospital.

REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!