



# healthy heart

HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION


## We're here to help you keep your heart healthy

As part of Community Health Plan's (CHP) health improvement initiative, we are pleased to announce that the Cardiac Connections disease management program is now provided locally through our St. Joseph office. We believe it's important for you to speak with someone who understands your local health care system and can help you navigate through it.

Your care partner is there for you when you need encouragement, support or information about your condition.

As another extension of our service, we offer *Healthy Heart*, a quarterly health newsletter that keeps you informed of the issues that matter to you and your health.

For more information about CHP or our disease management programs,

 visit [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com) and then click on "Health Improvement."

If you need information about your condition after hours, we offer a 24-hour nurse line through Community Health Line. Just call **(816) 271-4000** or **1-800-455-2476**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Community  
Health Line

**(816) 271-4000**  
**1-800-455-2476**



## EXERCISE strategies

BEING ACTIVE IS GOOD FOR your health, and that includes your heart.

Just 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity most days of the week can provide cardiovascular fitness and help protect you from heart attack and stroke, the American Heart Association reports.

Of course, it's easy to know you ought to exercise more. The key is knowing just how to increase your activity. Try these ideas.

- Pick activities that are fun—you'll be more likely to stick with them. Doing a variety of activities can also help prevent boredom. Walk, bike, golf, mall walk or swim—whatever keeps you interested.
- Start out slowly. Don't exhaust yourself. Instead, gradually in-

crease how long and how hard you exercise.

- Keep track of your successes. Keep a record of your activity and don't forget to reward yourself along the way.

"Get Movin' St. Joe" can motivate you. Call (816) 271-7250 to learn more.

- Find chunks of time. If you can't manage 30 minutes all at once, try to get in two 15-minute sessions during the day.

Talk to your doctor before getting started if you haven't exercised in a long time or have any health problems.



# HEALTHY facts

## UH-OH, I ATE A DOUGHNUT

The next time you blow your weight-loss diet, don't give up. Instead of "I ate a doughnut this morning, so I might as well eat what I like the rest of the day," try thinking, "Oh, well, I can still eat healthy meals at lunch and dinner."

—National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

## CIGARETTES: JUST A FEW A DAY MAY TRIPLE RISK OF DEATH

Comparing people who never smoked to people who smoked one to four cigarettes per day, researchers found that so-called "light smokers" had:

- Nearly three times the risk of dying from coronary artery disease.
- Three to five times the risk of dying from lung cancer.

The more cigarettes people smoked daily during the 25-year study, the greater the risk of death.

—Tobacco Control

# STRESS busters

LIFE THROWS PLENTY OF curveballs. Sometimes it feels as if they're coming at you from all sides.

While you can't stop challenges from coming your way, you can take steps to better cope with them.

In fact, managing stress in positive ways may do your heart good, according to the American Heart Association. For example, stress management may help lower blood pressure and reduce the possibility of overeating and becoming inactive. Consider these ideas:

- When you feel stressed, talk about your concerns with family, friends or other people you trust. Ask for support if you need it.
- Accept things you can't change. Remember, you aren't responsible for solving the world's problems.
- Don't use food, cigarettes, alcohol or other drugs to cope with stress. This only make matters worse.

Stressed? For health improvement tips, visit [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com).

- Try to look for the good instead of the bad in situations.
- Exercise regularly. And by all means, choose activities that you enjoy.
- Practice saying no. Rather than promising too much, set clear limits on how much you'll do for family members.
- Allow yourself enough time to get things done.
- Join a support group for people with similar concerns.
- If you're having trouble coping on your own, seek help from a counselor or other mental health professional. Your doctor can offer advice as well.



## healthyheart

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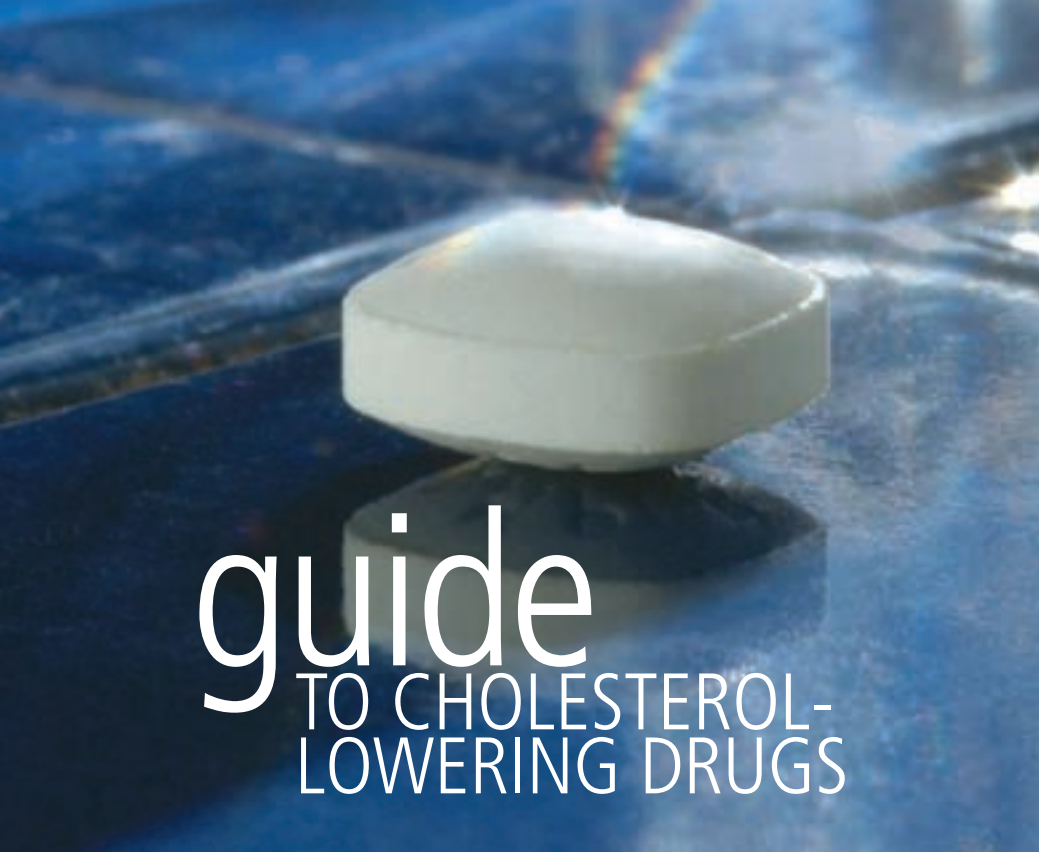
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# guide TO CHOLESTEROL- LOWERING DRUGS

SOMETIMES A HEALTHIER DIET, exercise and weight loss aren't enough to keep your blood cholesterol level in check. You may also need to take one or more medications, such as:

**Statins**, which slow cholesterol production in the liver. Statins mainly lower bad LDL cholesterol.

Though most people don't have side effects, statins can cause upset stomach, gas, constipation and abdominal pain or cramps. If you notice muscle pain or weakness, call your doctor right away.

**Bile acid sequestrants**,

which work by keeping cholesterol-laden bile acids in the intestines, where they can be eliminated from the body. Bile acid sequestrants help lower LDL cholesterol and are sometimes combined with a statin to further reduce LDL levels.

Side effects may include constipation, nausea and gas. Bile acid sequestrants can interfere with the

absorption of other drugs, so talk to your doctor about the best time to take medications.

**Nicotinic acid**, which is a form of vitamin B that helps lower LDL cholesterol and triglycerides. Nicotinic acid can also help raise good HDL levels.

People taking this medication may have hot flashes, nausea, indigestion, gas, vomiting, diarrhea or peptic ulcer problems. Nico-

tinic acid can also increase the effect of some high blood pressure medications.

**Fibrates**, which help lower triglyceride levels

and help raise HDL levels. Though fibrates can help lower LDL levels in people with normal triglyceride levels, these medications may actually raise LDL levels in people with high triglycerides.

Most people can take fibrates with no problems. However, side effects may include indigestion, gallstones and muscle problems.

Source: National Cholesterol Education Program

## Fortified foods can help lower cholesterol levels

Here's another way to fight high cholesterol: a daily dose of stanols and sterols.

Plant-based foods—such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, cereals, legumes and vegetable oils (especially soybean oil)—contain stanols and sterols. These substances help block the absorption of cholesterol and have been shown to lower bad LDL cholesterol by 6 to 15 percent.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol that include at least 1.3 grams of plant sterols or 3.4 grams of plant stanols, consumed in two meals with other foods, may reduce the risk of heart disease.

Plant-based foods contain only small amounts of stanols and sterols. To achieve the recommended amount, you can look for foods fortified with stanols and sterols, such as butter spreads, salad dressings and snack bars. Just check the label to see if the item has been fortified with these substances.

For more information about adding stanols and sterols to your diet, talk to your doctor.

Source: International Food Information Council Foundation

Cardiac Connections can help you take control. Visit [www.myhcp.com](http://www.myhcp.com).



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# KEEPING pace

## CORRECTING COMMON MYTHS ABOUT PACEMAKERS

LIVING WITH A PACEMAKER MAY not mean what you think.

**Myth:** Because I have a pacemaker, I must slow down.

**Fact:** People with pacemakers can be quite active. Some even run in marathons. Generally the only situations you have to avoid are full-contact sports and exposure to arc welding equipment, MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanners and high-voltage commercial transformers. Talk to your doctor to find out whether you will face additional restrictions.

**Myth:** I can't use a cell phone.

**Fact:** Some high-power digital cell phones may be off-limits. But typically you need to follow only two precautions with cell phones. First, don't put your phone in a

pocket near your pacemaker. Second, hold your phone to the ear farthest away from your pacemaker.

**Myth:** I don't need my heart medications anymore.

**Fact:** You still need to take any drug your doctor prescribes.

**Myth:** Now that I have a pacemaker, I won't have a heart attack.

**Fact:** Your pacemaker helps your heart beat regularly, but it won't protect you against clogged blood vessels and the heart attacks they cause. So be sure to reduce your heart attack risk with a healthy lifestyle.

*Source: American Heart Association*

Questions? Call your  
cardiac care partner at  
1-800-447-3617.

## What's moderate?

Moderate activity means that you are burning about 3½ to 7 calories per minute. Examples:

- Walking about 3 to 4½ mph on a level surface.
- Cycling at about 5 to 9 mph on fairly flat terrain.
- Raking the lawn or pushing a power lawn mower.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## An exercise buddy builds resolve

Need a little extra motivation to stick with that exercise plan? Try exercising with a friend.

Making the commitment to work out with a friend can give you the push to show up and exercise—especially on those days when you might not otherwise bother.

Encourage each other if you get off track. And reward yourselves as you reach your fitness goals.

Together you can stick with the plan, get fit and improve health.

*Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute*

## We're here 24/7

If you have a question about your condition after hours, we offer a 24-hour nurse line through **Community Health Line**. Our registered nurses have the experience it takes to provide quality health information.

This local service is free and confidential and is offered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you have a health concern, call the Community Health Line at **(816) 271-4000** or **1-800-455-2476**.

