

healthy heart

HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION

Common sources of cholesterol

Animal products such as meat, fish, eggs, butter, cheese and whole milk contain cholesterol. And foods that contain trans fat and saturated fat cause your body to make more cholesterol.

Foods that come from plants—such as fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds—do not contain cholesterol.

Help lower your cholesterol intake by choosing foods such as:

- Fat-free or low-fat dairy products.
- Egg whites instead of whole eggs.
- Baked or grilled fish.
- Lean cuts of meat and poultry.

Source: American Heart Association

Your numbers

Having your cholesterol levels checked regularly is an important step in having a healthy heart.

The test your doctor may recommend is called a lipoprotein profile.

It measures how many milligrams of cholesterol and triglycerides (fats) are in a deciliter of your blood (mg/dL). Less than 200 mg/dL of total cholesterol is considered desirable.

Talk to your doctor to find out how often you should be tested.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



cholesterol

THE GOOD AND THE BAD

CHOLESTEROL IS AN IMPORTANT part of the body. It uses this fatty, waxy substance to form cells and to make substances like hormones and vitamin D.

But a high level of cholesterol can increase your risk for coronary heart disease and heart attack.

Cholesterol travels in the bloodstream by carriers called lipoproteins. There are two main types.

High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is considered good because a high level may protect against heart attack.

The other type, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, is considered bad because a high level of it increases your risk for heart disease.

LDL cholesterol can combine with other substances to form a thick, hard deposit on artery walls called plaque. When plaque builds up and starts to block an artery, it can cause a heart attack or stroke.

A high level of cholesterol can increase your risk of heart disease.

Your body makes all of the cholesterol it needs. But you also get some from the foods you eat.

To help keep your cholesterol at a healthy level, limit your daily intake to 300 milligrams, or 200 milligrams if you have heart disease, says the American Heart Association.



HEALTHY facts

HEART-SMART FITNESS TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE
Web-based tools from the American Heart Association (AHA) can help you get—and stay—on the track to heart health.

The AHA's new Start! program offers an online fitness tracker, an eating guide, low-fat recipes, healthy food buying tips and more.

For more information or to sign up for the free Start! program, visit www.americanheart.org.

LIPID LEVELS MAY FORETELL THE RISK OF STROKE
High cholesterol levels in the blood may increase the risk of the most common type of stroke.

A 10-year study of 15,632 women found high cholesterol levels raised the likelihood of having an ischemic stroke, as did having low levels of HDL (good) cholesterol.

—Journal of the American College of Cardiology

drug interactions

DANGEROUS COMBINATIONS

MEDICINES TO TREAT HEART failure are meant to help.

But some heart failure drugs don't interact well with certain other medicines, including those you can buy without a prescription. Some drug combinations may even make heart failure worse.

For example, nonprescription antacids with aluminum or magnesium, antidiarrheal medicines containing kaolin and pectin, and bulk laxatives such as psyllium can all interfere with the body's ability to use the prescription drug digoxin.

In addition, some heart failure drugs, when used with cough and cold remedies, can increase blood pressure. And interactions with anti-inflammatory medicines—such as aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen—may increase water retention and

decrease kidney function.

To avoid these and other adverse drug interactions:

- Ask the pharmacist to check for potential problems, even when you purchase nonprescription medicine.
- Tell your doctor about all the drugs you are currently taking. Include over-the-counter products, such as pain relievers or herbal medicines.
- When you get a new prescription, ask your doctor what side effects you might expect from the drug and whether it could interfere with other medicines you take.

If you have a problem with a medicine, call your doctor right away. Fear of side effects shouldn't keep people with heart failure

from taking the medicines they need.

For quick answers to your questions, call our nurse line at **800-455-2476**.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Heart Association

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healthy habits

HEALTHY KIDS

WE PROTECT OUR KIDS WITH immunizations and bicycle helmets, and we teach them to look both ways before crossing the street.

But our modern lifestyles are leaving them wide open to another serious risk: heart disease.

It's true that heart disease is most likely in people who are middle age or older. But this disease can begin years earlier with risk factors such as high cholesterol, diabetes and excess weight.

In fact, according to the American Diabetes Association, these health problems are now showing up in children.

The culprit in this trend lies in kids' everyday habits, says the American Heart Association (AHA).

Consumption of high-calorie, low-nutrition foods, such as sugar-sweetened soda and french fries, can lead to overweight kids. And too much TV or computer time may mean not enough exercise to burn off the pounds.

These unhealthy habits can open the door for heart disease. Evidence of early heart disease has been

found in teenagers.

Parents can turn these health risks around, however, starting with how they feed their babies.

Some studies indicate that breastfeeding may reduce the risk of overweight in later life, says the AHA.

When babies begin solid food, don't overfeed them. Consistently offer heart-healthy foods like fruits and vegetables—it can take up to 10 tries for a baby to accept a new food.

For older kids, parents should model healthy habits themselves. The whole family should eat meals high in fruits and vegetables and

low in sugary and fatty foods, says the AHA.

It's also good to limit salt and trans fat, which is found in some

margarines, oils and snack foods. And serving baked or broiled fish twice a week can supply omega-3 fatty acids—substances that may help prevent heart disease.

You can help your kids exercise by playing active games with them or taking them on walks.

Evidence of early heart disease has been found in teenagers.

Type 2 diabetes: Not just for adults

Diabetes and kids: It's a bad—and all too common—combination.

Each year more and more children are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, a disease once thought to happen only in adults.

If you track this trend, you'll find it goes hand in hand with another health problem: overweight. In just the last 20 years, the number of overweight children has doubled, reports the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Being overweight is a major risk factor for diabetes, which can lead to blindness, amputations and kidney disease.

But that's not all. Overweight also increases the risk for heart disease—the No. 1 killer of people with diabetes. And since extra pounds often last into adulthood, overweight kids today face serious health problems now and in the future.

Talk to your child's doctor if you think your child is overweight. The doctor can offer suggestions on how to help your child take off those extra pounds.

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searching OUT THE SODIUM

ALMOST ALL OF US EAT MORE sodium than we should.

And there's plenty of reason to cut back—especially if you're concerned about your blood pressure.

Eating less sodium could help keep high blood pressure from developing and may help lower already elevated blood pressure levels. And if you take medication to control high blood pressure, eating less sodium can help that medicine work better, notes the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Dietary recommendations tell us we should limit sodium to less than 2,400 milligrams per day. That's about 1 teaspoon of table salt.

But most of us eat two to three times as much as we should. And about 75 to 80 percent of that sodium comes from eating processed

and restaurant foods, according to the American Medical Association.

To help lower your sodium intake, read nutrition labels. Keep an eye out for typically high-sodium foods, like salty pretzels and chips, canned soups, frozen dinners, salad dressings, soy sauce, lunch meats, and canned vegetables. Opt for low-sodium or no-salt-added varieties whenever possible.

Check the nutrition labels on other foods as well. You might be surprised to find sodium in unexpected places, like instant cereals, breakfast cereals and frozen pizza.

To speak with your disease management nurse, call
816-271-7862.

HEALTHY recipe Grilled vegetables

Ingredients

- 2 small zucchini (about 5 inches long)
- 2 small onions (about 2 inches in diameter)
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon paprika
- 1/8 teaspoon salt (optional)
- Dash of pepper
- Nonstick cooking spray

Instructions

1. Cut vegetables into bite-size pieces.
2. Sprinkle seasonings on vegetables and toss to coat evenly.
3. Spray large skillet or griddle with nonstick cooking spray.
4. Place seasoned vegetables on hot griddle and stir-fry about 10 to 15 minutes until vegetables are tender. Recipe serves 4.

Nutrition facts (per serving)	
Calories 29	Calories from fat 0
Percent Daily Value*	
Total fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Protein 1g	
Percent of calories from fat 0	

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Reprinted with permission from Brenda J. Ponichtera, R.D., Quick & Healthy, Vol. 2 (ScaleDown, 1995)