



healthy heart

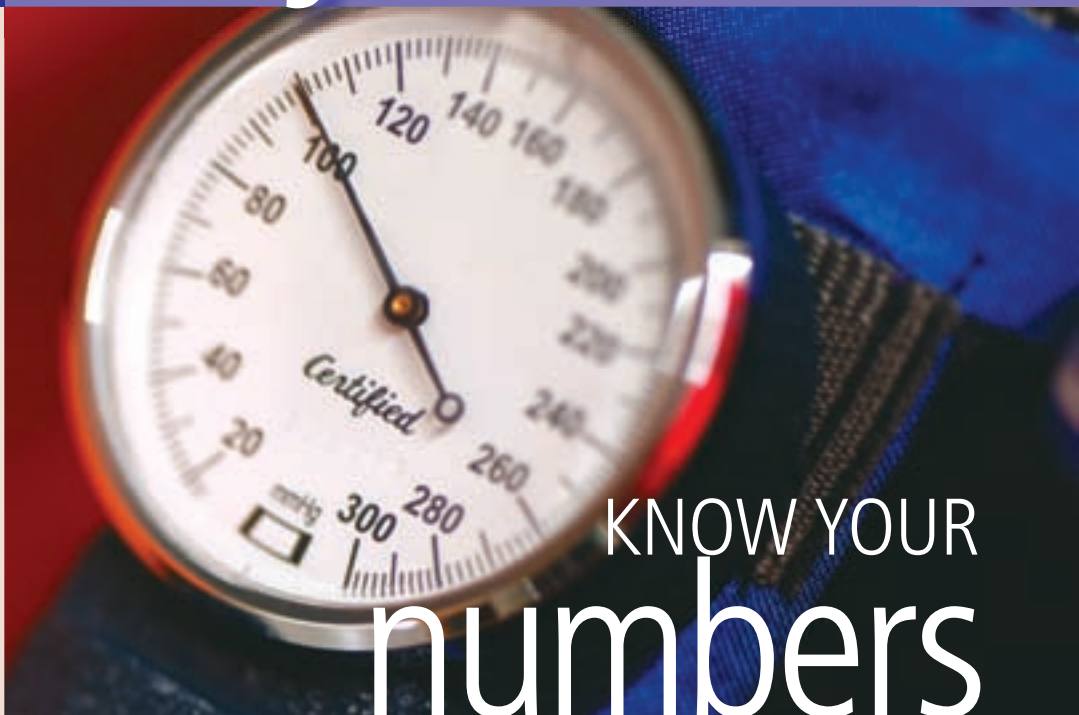
HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION

Blood pressure ups and downs

Your blood pressure rises and falls all day. It's lowest while you sleep, and it goes up when you're awake. Blood pressure also can rise if you're excited, nervous or active. When you're sitting or standing still, though, your blood pressure stays fairly steady.

It's best for blood pressure to remain lower than 120/80 mm Hg. If your pressure is higher, you'll want to work with your doctor to bring it back down to a healthy level.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



KNOW YOUR numbers

Go easy on salt

For some people, sodium, including salt, increases blood pressure. So if you have high blood pressure, you'll want to limit your daily sodium intake to less than 2,400 mg. Your doctor may advise even less.

To cut back on sodium:

- Choose low- or reduced-sodium or no-salt-added foods.
- Limit convenience foods, such as frozen dinners and canned soups. These foods tend to be high in sodium.
- Use herbs, spices and salt-free seasoning blends for cooking and at the table.



Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

BLOOD PRESSURE MEASURES THE force of blood against artery walls as the heart pumps blood through the body.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, means that your heart is working too hard. Left untreated, this potentially serious condition can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease or blindness.

Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury, or mm Hg. The top number (systolic) represents pressure during heartbeats. The bottom number (diastolic) is the pressure when the heart is relaxed between beats.

The National Institutes of Health puts blood pressure levels in these categories: ■ **Normal**—below 120/80 mm Hg. ■ **Prehypertension**—120-139/80-89 mm Hg.

■ **Stage 1 hypertension**—140-159/90-99 mm Hg. ■ **Stage 2 hypertension**—at or greater than 160/at or greater than 100 mm Hg.

For people with diabetes, high blood pressure starts at 130/80.

High blood pressure means that your heart is working too hard.

If you have high blood pressure, your doctor may suggest:

- Losing weight if you're overweight.
- Exercising regularly.
- Following a healthy, low-fat diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Quitting smoking.

In some cases, medication may also be needed.

HEALTH facts

BEWARE OF THE BULGE

A big belly may raise the risk of heart disease. In a study of more than 2,700 men and women, those with the largest waist-to-hip ratios were more likely to have calcium deposits in their coronary arteries—a risk factor for heart disease—than were those with the smallest ratios.

—*Journal of the American College of Cardiology*

GO FOR THE GRAINS

Start your day with a bowl of whole-grain breakfast cereal, and you just may lower your risk of developing heart failure. A study of more than 21,000 men found that those who ate the most whole-grain cereal were significantly less likely to develop heart failure than were those who ate the least amount.

—*Archives of Internal Medicine*



stroke

REDUCE YOUR RISK

IF YOU HAVE HEART DISEASE, you'll want to take good care of your heart to help prevent further problems. And in doing so, you'll get an unexpected bonus: You'll reduce your risk of having a stroke.

Many types of heart disease can increase your risk of having a stroke; and stroke, in turn, is a risk factor for heart disease. That's because atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, can cause both heart attack and stroke, depending on where in the body arteries are blocked.

According to the American Stroke Association (ASA), there are a number of risk factors common to both heart disease and stroke, including:

- High blood pressure.
- Smoking.
- High LDL cholesterol (the

bad kind). ■ Low HDL cholesterol (the good kind). ■ Physical inactivity. ■ Being overweight or obese.

Fortunately, all of these risk factors are controllable, says the ASA.

Managing high blood pressure is the single most important thing you

can do to reduce your risk for stroke.

In addition, quitting smoking (if you smoke) and eating five or

more servings of fruits and vegetables daily may help reduce your risk of stroke.

So can getting at least 30 minutes of activity most days of the week. Exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight, control blood pressure and reduce your LDL cholesterol.

Many types of heart disease can increase your risk of having a stroke.

healthyheart

HEALTHY HEART is published as a health improvement service for members of COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN's Cardiac Connections program, 137 N. Belt Highway, St. Joseph, MO 64506, 800-990-9247, www.mychp.com.

Linda Bahrke
Plan Administrator

James J. McMillen,
MD, FACP, CMD
Medical Director

Amy Owens
Marketing/Communications

Information in HEALTHY HEART comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.
Copyright © 2008 Coffey Communications, Inc.

HTN22036p

rhythm OF THE HEART

AN OFF BEAT COULD BE ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

SOMETIMES THE HEART GOES a little crazy—and not because of a romantic notion. The problem is a medical condition called atrial fibrillation (AF).

AF occurs when the heart's upper chambers (atria) contract in a very fast, irregular way (fibrillate). When this happens, blood isn't pumped completely out of the chambers, so it may clot. The clot could break away and float through the bloodstream to your brain or another part of your body.

This series of events could cause you to have a stroke. AF can also

Call our 24-hour nurse line at **800-455-2476** or **816-271-4000**.

lead to heart failure or a heart attack.

You might never know you have AF until a doctor discovers it during an examination. Or you may feel an occasional thumping or flutter in your chest.

Other signs of AF are shortness of breath, a general feeling of weakness, difficulty exercising,

chest pain, fainting, dizziness, fatigue and confusion.

Sometimes AF goes away without treatment. When symptoms persist, treatment may restore the heart's normal rhythm. If rhythm can't be restored, the goal is to control symptoms and prevent complications.

Treatments for AF include:

- Medicines to slow a rapid heart rate.
- Medicines such as warfarin and aspirin to reduce stroke risk.

About 15 percent of strokes occur in people with AF.

- Drugs delivered through veins to restore heart rhythm.
- A pacemaker implanted under the skin to regulate heart rhythm.
- Surgery to reduce the uncoordinated electrical activity in the heart.
- Electric shock to restore normal rhythm.

tively infrequent in people under the age of 40. The likelihood that you will develop AF increases with age. Up to 5 percent of people over 80 have it.

Your risk also increases if you have:

- Coronary artery disease or rheumatic heart disease.
- Heart failure.
- A defect in the heart's structure.
- Inflamed tissues around the heart.

- Electrical signals in the heart that don't fire properly.

People who are having a heart attack may develop AF during the event. And AF may develop in people who have just had surgery.

Obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, lung diseases and an overactive thyroid are other risk factors for AF.



Sources: American Heart Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Are you at risk for getting AF?

Aging and diseases of the heart are common risk factors of atrial fibrillation (AF), according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Although AF can develop in children and young adults, the condition is rela-

A MESSAGE FOR women



WOMEN MAY THINK THAT ONLY men need to worry about heart disease. But that's a dangerous assumption. Here's why:

Just like for men, heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the U.S. Many women fear breast cancer, but women are much more likely to die of heart disease than of breast cancer. In fact, heart disease kills more women over the age of 65 than all types of cancer combined.

But the good news is that there is plenty you can do to lower your

There is plenty you can do to lower your risk for heart disease.

risk for heart disease, such as:

- Don't smoke. More than half of all heart attacks in women under 50 are related to smoking.
- Control your blood pressure.
- Control your cholesterol levels.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Follow a healthy eating plan. A diet low in fat and salt and high in fruits and vegetables is best.
- Exercise regularly. Aim for at least 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.
- Know your family medical history. If you have a parent or sibling with early heart disease, you are at increased risk for getting the disease yourself.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Orzo skillet

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground turkey
- 2 cups canned, crushed tomato
- 1 cup diced onion
- ½ cup orzo pasta, uncooked
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ⅛ teaspoon hot sauce
- 1 can (16 ounces) pinto beans, rinsed and drained

Instructions

1. Cook ground turkey in a large skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until browned. Drain.
2. Stir in remaining ingredients.
3. Heat to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes, stirring frequently until pasta is tender.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition facts (per serving)	
Calories 330	Calories from fat 25
Percent Daily Value*	
Total fat 3g	5%
Saturated fat 1g	3%
Cholesterol 45mg	15%
Sodium 480mg	20%
Total carbohydrate 42g	14%
Dietary fiber 8g	32%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 38g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	60%
Calcium	8%
Iron	25%

*Percent daily values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Recipe from www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov.