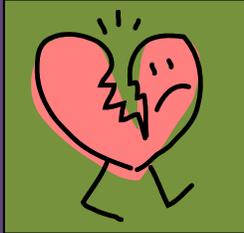


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# Heart Health - Don't miss a beat



As we grow older we experience a higher risk of developing heart disease. In fact, 84% of individuals age 65 years and older die from heart disease. Heart disease is a term given to a group of health conditions that

affect the heart. The most common form of heart disease is called coronary artery disease which is often responsible for serious cardiovascular events such as a heart attack, heart failure, chest pain, and irregular heart

beat. Although heart disease risks increase with age, there are plenty of ways to keep you heart in great shape. Proper lifestyle habits and a heart healthy diet can assist to protect you!

**Did you know...**  
84% of individuals age 65 years and older die from heart disease?

**And did you know...**  
much of that is preventable?

## Know the Warning Signs of Heart Disease

- ♥ Localized pain in the chest or uncomfortable pressure in the chest
- ♥ Radiating pain from the centre of the chest going down one or both arms or up toward the neck, jaw, shoulder or back
- ♥ Having a hard time catching your breath
- ♥ Feeling very full or having indigestion
- ♥ Paleness, sweating or weakness
- ♥ Feeling nauseous or vomiting
- ♥ An irregular heart beat
- ♥ Feeling faint or dizzy
- ♥ Anxiety





### Know the warning signs cont'd

Often times people experiencing these symptoms are in denial that anything is wrong and do not want to admit that they may be experiencing a cardiovascular event. If you notice any of these signs, do not ignore them. Canadians tend to delay getting the help they need, waiting up to 5 hours after first experiencing symptoms. The longer you wait, the more damage that can be caused to the heart. Delay in the early stages can significantly reduce a person's chances for survival.

### What are the Risk Factors?

Two major risk factors for heart disease, **age** and **family history**, cannot be altered. However, there are many risk factors that you can change or control including the following:

**Smoking** – People who smoke have 2-3 times more risk of having a cardiovascular incident compared to that of a non smoker. Chronic exposure to second hand smoke may also increase risk.

**High Blood pressure** – High blood pressure increases the workload on the heart. Over time, this can lead to a weakened or enlarged heart. Blood pressure can be controlled through medication and lifestyle changes.

**High Cholesterol** – The risk of heart disease increases with a rise in the intake of LDL cholesterol, otherwise known as 'bad' cholesterol. You can strive for a healthy level of cholesterol by

choosing a diet that is low in fat and high in fiber.

**Lack of Exercise** – Regular physical activity can help protect against heart disease, especially in those who are of middle and old age. Exercise also helps to control cholesterol, diabetes, and to assist in maintaining a healthy weight and a reduced blood pressure.

**Obesity** – Obesity increases the load placed on the heart, contributing to elevated blood pressure, high cholesterol, and can be a risk factor for adult onset diabetes.

**Diabetes** – significantly increases the risk of heart attack.

**Stress** – People who feel stress tend to overeat and smoke which are unhealthy lifestyle choices that can increase your risk of developing heart disease.



**Smoking is the main cause of heart disease.**

*And it doesn't just cause heart disease, it causes emphysema, cancer, and chronic bronchitis – all of which can shorten your life by 10 years!*

**What can you do to ensure your heart is healthy?****Stop or minimize smoking.**

Quitting smoking and protecting yourself from second hand smoke will reduce your risk.

**Watch your Numbers.** Regular checkups with your doctor are important to monitor health conditions that affect the heart including high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

**Keep physically active.**

Moderate exercise is one of the best measures you can take to keep your heart, and the rest of your body, healthy. Exercise can assist to maintain your abilities as much as possible and to reduce stress. People who exercise regularly typically have less body fat and smoke less compared to people who do not exercise. They also tend to have fewer blood pressure issues and less heart disease. Daily, moderate exercise strengthens the heart muscles, vessels and arteries. Walking or bicycling is good forms of exercise to consider. Consult with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program.

**Adopt a Heart Healthy Diet.**

Eat foods with reduced amounts of saturated fats, cholesterol, and salt and try to increase your fiber intake. Load up on fresh fruits and vegetables!

**Reduce your Alcohol Intake.**

Excess alcohol intake can worsen health conditions that lead to heart disease such as blood pressure, arrhythmias and high cholesterol levels.

**Watch your Weight.** Excess weight can lead to increased risk for heart disease. Maintain a healthy body weight for your body frame.

**Minimize Stress in your Life.**

Stress can compound many heart disease risks by steering you toward unhealthy lifestyle choices. Search for healthy outlets to relive stress build up.

**Mind over Matter.** A happy and positive attitude toward yourself and your life will help you to do the right thing. Your outlook on your physical body reflects how you live and feel. Modifying your thinking can modify your life when it comes to having a healthy cardiovascular system. Nothing is more important than feeling good.

*For more information on Heart Health, contact the Public Health Agency of Canada.*

**5 Ways to Reduce Teacher Stress:**

- 1) Walk
- 2) Talk to a colleague
- 3) Learn to say the word "No" and mean it
- 4) Relax when possible
- 5) Find a creative outlet

