

Completely Well



Insurance Agency



Preventive

Heart Health: American Heart Month

Did you know that the leading cause of death is heart disease? Though women continue to think of heart disease as a man's disease, both men and women are at risk for cardiovascular disease, heart attack and stroke. It's important for all adults to know the risk factors and symptoms of heart disease.

Risk factors for heart disease in women and men include family history, high blood pressure, diabetes, being overweight or obese, smoking, lack of exercise and high cholesterol. Women's risk for heart disease increases as they get older, especially post-menopause or post-hysterectomy if the ovaries are removed. Estrogen seems to protect the heart, and estrogen drops after menopause or removal of the ovaries.

Many men report heart symptoms as being a crushing pressure in the chest or pain that radiates down the left arm or up to the jaw. Women's symptoms are often different. Women experience fatigue, shortness of breath, back pain, nausea, stomach pain, pain in the shoulders or a "heartburn" feeling in the chest. Any combination of these symptoms - whether traditionally men's or women's symptoms - are a reason to seek immediate medical attention. Even mild chest pain without other symptoms requires a call to your doctor.

There are things that can be done to reduce the risk of heart disease. Smokers should quit smoking. Smoking is one of the leading causes for heart disease, and quitting smoking will reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease and other serious conditions. Losing weight is important as well. By eating well and exercising to lose weight, cholesterol levels and blood pressure can be lowered. Getting active will also help. Regular exercise - at least 30 minutes every day - can help you maintain a healthy weight, lower blood pressure, and decrease cholesterol. For those who have type II diabetes, losing weight and exercising can often get the disease under control as well which is another way to protect the heart. See your doctor regularly to monitor any possible risk factors, and if you believe you are having a heart related problem, make sure that your doctor checks you out completely and runs any necessary tests.

Heart health is a serious issue. Make a healthy choice today that reduces your risk for cardiovascular disease. Put down the cigarettes. Take a walk. Skip the fried food. See your doctor. Get a screening and know your numbers. Do whatever it takes to protect your health for your own longevity and happiness and for the good of your family.

National Cancer Prevention Month

Sponsored by the American Institute for Cancer Research, National Cancer Prevention Month highlights the importance of healthy behaviors and their influence on reducing cancer risk. Consider the following:

- ✓ A diet that is based on plant foods can reduce cancer risk.
- ✓ Maintaining a healthy weight protects against many chronic diseases, including cancer.
- ✓ Choosing to be active can decrease your risk for many cancers.
- ✓ Avoiding processed meats can lower your risk for certain cancers.
- ✓ Regular screening is an important tool for detecting cancer in its early stages.



Nutrition

Produce of the Month: Shallots

Related to onions and garlic, shallots add great flavor to a variety of dishes without adding fat or excess calories. A member of the allium family, a shallot is often described as having a mild onion flavor, but also sweeter and richer. Shallots contain flavonoids, an antioxidant found in vegetables and fruits that may lower your risk of developing heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

The Basics: Choose shallots that are dry and firm and have not sprouted. The paper skin should be relatively smooth. Store shallots the way you store onions, in a cool, dry place. They can also be refrigerated for no more than 1 week. When ready to use, peel the shallots and chop according to your needs.

Try This: Shallots are a great addition to sauces, salad dressings, and egg dishes and work well with poultry and fish. Like onions, they also benefit from caramelizing. Sauté finely chopped shallots in a little olive oil and add to brown rice, barley, or quinoa. Roast shallots in a shallow baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Roast at 400° until softened. Add 1-2 T. of balsamic vinegar and serve with slices of toasted Italian bread.

The Facts: One tablespoon of raw shallots contains 7 calories and no fat.

Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner – Tips for Better Health

Want to eat better in 2015?

General Tips for Healthier Eating:

Include protein, complex carbohydrates, and a little healthy fat in each meal. Make sure you are eating enough fiber. At least half of your meal should be vegetables/fruits. Watch your portions – don't eat until stuffed. Drink water and avoid pop, alcohol, and energy drinks loaded with sugar. Limit juice. Slow down when you eat and enjoy!

Breakfast

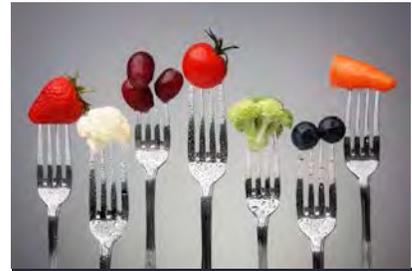
- Oatmeal – add a little yogurt and fruit for sweetness, calcium, and vitamins
- Whole grain toast with sliced banana and peanut butter (you could also substitute almond butter)
- 1 egg on whole grain English muffin with sliced avocado and some salsa

Quick Tip: Many restaurants (including fast food spots and national coffee chains) sell oatmeal and yogurt parfaits. These will often be higher in sugar than what you make at home but can still be a good choice over other breakfast options when you are on the road.

Lunch

- Broth based soup and half a sandwich (hold the mayo!)
- Margherita pizza – a thin crust pizza with tomatoes, basil, and mozzarella (representing the colors of the Italian flag!)
- Turkey sandwich on whole grain bread with tomato and cucumber.

Quick Tip: A grilled chicken breast sandwich (no mayo or sauce) is a good choice when faced with a traditional fast food menu. Be aware that it will be very high in sodium. Better to brown bag lunches when possible.



Dinner

- Grilled fish, chicken, or turkey breast with brown rice and grilled asparagus
- Whole grain pasta with sautéed tomatoes, onions, carrots, and spinach.
- Chili – made with ground turkey, beans, tomatoes, garlic, onion, and barley. A vegetarian version would be delicious as well.

Quick Tip: Read the menu carefully when having dinner out. Choose grilled, roasted, broiled, or baked over fried. And don't be afraid to make special requests. Watch the portions. Take half home for lunch later in the week!

Lifestyle

Colors

So, why is it that we are said to be “blue” when we are sad, “in the pink” when in good health, or even “green with envy”? It would seem that color is a natural companion to emotions and mood. Physically, seeing color is a matter of seeing light – and light is reflected differently off of different colors. When the light enters the eye, the cones in the retina “see” the color and send a signal to the brain.

But how does that color signal also signal an emotional response? It is unclear whether our response to color is cultural or hardwired in our nervous system. For example, research has shown that the color red can raise blood pressure. But the research is not clear on whether the color itself is the cause or if we associate red with traffic signals, emergency sirens, or other warning signs. We do know that certain colors have a similar impact on most people. For example -

- **Red** – increases pulse rate and blood pressure, may increase appetite, associated with passion as well as danger
- **Yellow** – considered cheerful and happy, yet also the most fatiguing to the eye; has been associated with anger and frustration
- **Blue** – trustworthy (true blue) and calming, research indicated that it can increase productivity
- **Green** – most associated with nature, calming and peaceful
- **Orange** – energetic and stimulating, may increase appetite

So, if we know that color will have some affect on us, it is worth paying attention to the colors that seem to relax us, make us happy, or even just make us feel more productive. Pay attention to colors that draw your eye and maybe think about what you associate with that color. Is it the green of a summer field or the blue of a nearby lake? Find ways to include the colors you most love. And you don’t have to repaint the whole house. Add your favorite colors through new pillows, picture frames, small household items that won’t break the bank. Include the colors that make you feel good in your day.

Less is More: Life Hacks by Marie McFadden CHES, ACSM-CPT

Here are a few of my favorite 'life hacks.' These are some easy things that we all can do to help us stay a bit ahead.

Money:

- Be a smart plastic spender. Ask your bank about your credit card's point system. If you can pay off your balances every month this is an easy way to earn cash. Many banks offer a point system where you can earn cash back, gift cards, or points towards major purchases such as airline tickets.
- Ask your electric company if they have a money saving plan where you pay a monthly flat fee. This will let you avoid surprising bills.
- Have money automatically deducted from your paycheck into your HSA, IRA, and/or savings accounts.

Diet:

- Eating meatless meals once or twice a week will help cut high-priced meat from your grocery bill.
- Eat dinner at home and pack the leftovers for lunch.
- Save the alcohol for at home, cheaper and safer.

Home:

- Turn off your lights! Help the environment and your wallet by making the conscious effort to turn off lights when you leave the room.
- Set your thermostat lower at night or when you are not home.
- Upgrade your light bulbs to the newer energy saving ones.
- Ask your cable company to bundle your services.

Play:

- Go to the movies during the day for the matinee price.
- When booking hotel rooms or flights, use online sites to compare and ensure you are getting the best price.
- Use sites such as Groupon for a fun, new outing.
- Check out your community calendar for low-cost events in your city.
- Use your local library for movies and magazines.



*Ask the Trainer by Erin Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT***Fitness****Question: What should my target heart rate be for weight loss?**

Answer: Before we figure out our target heart rate we need to figure out what our maximum heart rate is. To figure this out you need to take **220 and subtract your age**. That will give you an idea of what your maximum heart rate should be. When working out, you never want to get your heart rate above your maximum heart rate because then you put yourself at risk for a heart attack or stroke. So for example, if you were 40 years old your maximum heart rate would be 180 BPM. From here we can figure out your target heart rate. Usually your target heart rate should be anywhere from 50-85% of your maximum heart rate, depending on your current exercise level. If you are new to exercise, I would start with using the moderate intensity range leaning more towards the 50% range and gradually increasing towards the 70% range. As you get in better shape you can push yourself a little harder to go into the 70+% ranges. To determine percentage, multiply your maximum heart rate by .5 (50%), .7 (70%), .8 (85%), etc.

For moderate intensity exercise I would recommend your heart rate at 50-70% of your maximum and for vigorous exercise 70-85% of your maximum.

If you have any heart or medical conditions, always consult your doctor before exercising. I would highly recommend a heart rate monitor for anyone workout to get the most accurate heart rate as well!

Why Aerobics for Heart Health?

Exercise that raises your heart rate and increases your oxygen intake is considered aerobic. It benefits your heart by

- **strengthening** your heart muscle,
- **lowering** cholesterol,
- **helping** to maintain a healthy weight,
- **lowering** blood sugar, and
- **improving** mood.

Take a walk, ride a bike, swim a lap - get regular exercise for heart health!

Want to know more? Contact TCU Insurance for information on wellness programs. We can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well being.



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