

# Healthy heart habits

Coronary heart disease is one of the main causes of heart attacks. It affects both men and women. There is no single cause for coronary heart disease. However, there are known risk factors that increase your chance of developing it.

A risk factor can be described as the way in which you live and/or hereditary and health conditions. There are some risk factors that you can't change, such as getting older, being male and having a family history of coronary heart disease.

But there are many risk factors that you can change, such as smoking, blood pressure and cholesterol. By choosing to live a healthy lifestyle and following your doctor's advice, you can reduce your chance of developing coronary heart disease and having a heart attack.

## Risk factors you can change to reduce your chance of developing coronary heart disease



### Stop smoking

Smoking is bad for your heart. If you are a smoker, you should stop smoking. You can call the Quitline (13 7848) and ask to speak to an interpreter. You can also leave a message asking for someone to call you and speak to you in your preferred language. It would help to say which day and time would be best for you.

### Manage your blood pressure

To maintain a healthy blood pressure, it is important to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight by eating healthy foods and being physically active. You should also limit how much salt is in your food. If you have high blood pressure, take your medicine as prescribed by your doctor and see your doctor regularly to have your blood pressure checked.



### Manage your cholesterol

To maintain a healthy total blood cholesterol level, eat healthy foods including a variety of fruit and vegetables, plant and seed oils, whole grains, lean meat and poultry, and oily fish. Avoid foods high in saturated and trans fats. See your doctor to have your cholesterol checked. If you have high cholesterol, take your medicine as prescribed by your doctor.

### Manage your diabetes

Work with your doctor to create a plan for managing your diabetes based on healthy eating, physical activity and medicines. Take your medicine as prescribed by your doctor and see your doctor regularly to make sure your diabetes is well managed.



## Be physically active

Do moderate-intensity exercise for at least half an hour a day. You can do this half an hour in lots of 10 or 15 minutes throughout the day. Physical activity includes brisk walking, bowling, dancing, vacuuming, swimming and gardening. Taking part in physical activity regularly has many benefits, such as helping you to maintain a healthy weight. It is also a great way to meet people and be part of your community. Contact your local council, church, mosque or senior citizen group to find activities you can join.



## Eat healthy

Eat and enjoy a variety of healthy foods including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, meat without fat, nuts, seeds, legumes, fish and low or no fat dairy. Drink mainly water. Reduce how much salt you eat and do not add salt to your food. Choose plant or seed oils and fats, and avoid saturated and trans fats.

## Be a healthy weight

To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, balance how much energy (kilojoules) you consume through food and drink with how much energy (kilojoules) you use through physical activity. You can do this by doing 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week and eating healthy food every day.



## Be socially active

Being happy and having a good social life with family and friends is very important. Depression is more than feeling sad or 'low'. It is an illness and can increase your risk of coronary heart disease. Depression can be treated. If you feel depressed for more than two weeks, talk with your doctor, a family member or someone you know well.

See your doctor regularly for a check-up. This will help your doctor to find any emerging health issues. You can take this information sheet with you and talk with your doctor about any questions you have.

For more information, please call the Heart Foundation Health Information Service on **1300 36 27 87** or visit **[www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)**.



Translating and Interpreting Service: 131 450.

Developed with the support of Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and Department of Health, Victoria.

© 2012 National Heart Foundation of Australia ABN 98 008 419 761

INF-073-C

Terms of use: This material has been developed for general information and educational purposes only. It does not constitute medical advice. Please consult your health care provider if you have, or suspect you have, a health problem. The health information provided has been developed by the Heart Foundation and is based on independent research and the available scientific evidence at the time of writing. The information is obtained and developed from a variety of sources including but not limited to collaborations with third parties and information provided by third parties under licence. It is not an endorsement of any organisation, product or service. While care has been taken in preparing the content of this material, the National Heart Foundation of Australia, its employees and related parties cannot accept any liability, including for any loss or damage, resulting from the reliance on the content, or for its accuracy, currency and completeness. This material may be found in third parties programs or materials (including but not limited to show bags or advertising kits). This does not imply an endorsement or recommendation by the National Heart Foundation of Australia for such third parties organisations, products or services, including their materials or information. Any use of National Heart Foundation of Australia materials or information by another person or organisation is at the user's own risk.

The entire contents of this material are subject to copyright protection.