



Resident Wellness Newsletter

Diet + Exercise = Healthier Hearts

What can you do to prevent or reverse heart disease? Studies indicate that pairing a healthy diet with regular exercise is the best way not only to prevent heart disease, but to reverse risk factors.

According to the American Heart Association, exercising 30 minutes a day five days a week will improve your heart health and help reduce your risk of heart disease. They define “physical activity” as anything that makes you move your body and burn calories. This includes: climbing stairs, playing sports, walking, swimming, biking and more.

The heart needs exercise just like any other muscle. Muscles that are utilized regularly become stronger and healthier, whereas muscles that aren’t used weaken and atrophy. When it’s exercised, the heart can pump more blood through the body and continue working at optimal efficiency with little strain. This will likely help it to stay healthy longer. Regular exercise also helps to keep arteries and other blood vessels flexible, ensuring healthy blood flow and blood pressure.

According to the American Heart Association, as many as 250,000 deaths per year in the United States can be attributed to a lack of regular exercise. Living a sedentary, or inactive, lifestyle has consistently been



one of the top five risk factors for heart disease. Other risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, and obesity. Those with low levels of physical fitness also experience a higher rate of cardiovascular events, like heart attack and death.

According to research from the University of South Carolina, men who reported more than 23 hours a week of sedentary activity had a 64 percent greater risk of dying from heart disease than those who reported less than 11 hours. Inactivity also affects other risk factors for heart disease. For

example, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center, sedentary people have a 35 percent greater risk of developing high blood pressure than physically active people do.

Heart Health Benefits of Exercise:

- Exercise stimulates “nitric oxide”, which keeps blood vessels open
- Exercise raises the level of HDL (“good”) cholesterol
- Exercise reduces the triglyceride and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels
- Physical activity lowers the risk of coronary artery disease. More physically active study participants had 50% lower disease rates than sedentary subjects.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/heart-disease/exercise>

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