Brown & Brown

February 2025 Newsletter

February is Heart Month

Did you know that people who have close relationships at home, work, or in their community tend to be healthier and live longer? One reason, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), is that we're more successful at meeting our health goals when we work on them with others. NHLBI launched the #OurHearts movement to inspire us to protect and strengthen our hearts with the support of others.

Here are some facts, how-to tips, and resources to inspire you to join with others, even if you can't be physically together, to improve your heart health.

Heart disease is a leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Most middle-aged and young adults have one or more risk factors for heart disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or being a smoker or overweight. Having multiple risk factors increases your risk for heart disease.

3 Ways to Boost Your Heart Health

Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that heart disease causes 1 in every 5 deaths. Heart disease refers to several different types of heart conditions. Coronary artery disease—caused by plaque buildup in the walls of the heart's arteries—is the most common. Other forms of heart disease include heart attack, heart failure, arrhythmia and congenital heart defects.

The symptoms of heart disease can vary, and some people may not even know they have a heart condition until they have a heart attack. Red flags include shortness of breath, chest discomfort, difficulty with speech, heart palpitations and sudden loss of responsiveness.

Exercise Your Way to a Healthier Heart
Certain uncontrollable factors increase your risk of heart disease, including age, sex and family history. However, other factors that increase your risk for heart disease—such as stress, inactivity, obesity, diabetes, smoking and a poor diet—are controllable. A healthy diet and lifestyle are the best ways to fight heart disease, so consider incorporating these three types of exercise into your routine to improve your heart health:

Aerobic exercise improves circulation and can help your cardiac output. Get at least 30 minutes a day of heart-pumping moderate activity—like brisk walking, dancing or cycling—at least five days a week.

Resistance training with weights, bands or body weight at least two nonconsecutive days per week can help create leaner muscle mass. When paired with aerobic activity, you can raise your good cholesterol levels and lower bad cholesterol levels.

Flexibility workouts (e.g., stretching and balance) are critical for musculoskeletal health. It's important to stay flexible and free from joint pain so you can maintain your regular aerobic and resistance workouts.

Keep in mind that the overall pattern of your life choices can determine your heart health. Contact a health care professional to find out your risk for heart disease or for more information.
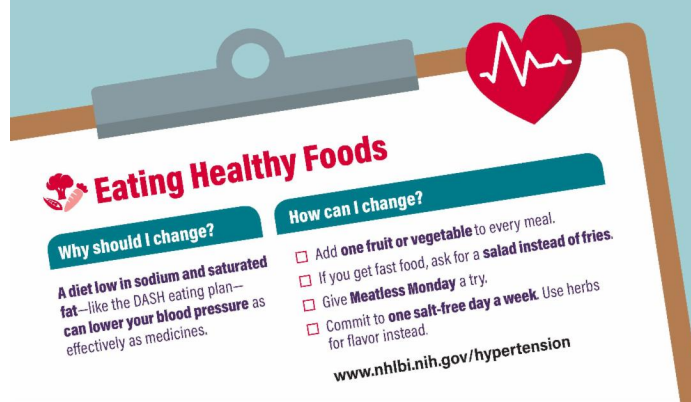
Eating Healthy Foods

What should I change? A diet low in sodium and saturated fat - like the DASH eating plan - can lower your blood pressure as effectively as medicines. How can I change? Add

one fruit or vegetable to every meal. If you get fast food, ask for a salad instead of fries. Give meatless Monday a try. Commit to one salt-free day a week. Use herbs for flavor instead.

Read More

Building Heart-healthy Habits

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the country for both men and women, accounting for 1 out of every 5 deaths. Cardiovascular disease and the conditions that lead to it can happen at any age. Some types of heart disease include arrhythmia, heart failure, heart attack and stroke.

The American Heart Association predicts that roughly 61% of U.S. adults will have some type of cardiovascular disease by 2050.

A heart-healthy lifestyle can reduce the risk of heart disease, and small changes can make a difference. Consider these incorporating these practical tips:

- **Get screened.** A heart disease screening checks your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels. If you don't know these numbers, a baseline screening is a starting point for monitoring your health.
- **Eat healthy.** It's crucial to control portion sizes and consume a balanced diet full of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and protein. Limit fast, fried and processed foods, saturated and trans fats, and sodium.
- **Be active.** It's important to engage in aerobic activity for at least 150 minutes weekly and muscle-strengthening activities two times per week. Flexibility workouts, such as stretching and balance, support musculoskeletal health and can help you keep up with your exercises.
- **Avoid or quit smoking.** Nicotine raises blood pressure, so quit smoking or vaping. Breathing secondhand smoke also affects your heart.

February is American Heart Month, which is a great time to take charge of your heart health and get screened. Your doctor can also provide more information about heart health and warning signs.

Jokes for February

What did one artery say to the other?
You're so vein!

Can February march?
No, but April may.

What is the best outfit for February 2nd?
A tu-tu.

Why should you date a goalie?
He's a keeper.