

Heart Healthy Habits – Cardiologist Perspective

An estimated 47% of Americans meet at least one of three major risk factors for heart disease: smoking, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. However, the good news is that all these behaviors can easily be controlled and modified to reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

Having a healthy heart can reduce your risk for conditions like heart attack and stroke. Here are heart-healthy habits I share with all my patients to help them increase their longevity.

Stop Eating Processed Foods

Many processed foods contain ample amounts of salt, sugar, fat, and synthetic ingredients that offer no real nutritional value. An easy way to boost your heart health is to stop buying processed foods and eat more whole, fresh foods. Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains like quinoa and brown rice are some of the best options.

Mind Your Portion Sizes

Portion sizes in the United States have grown significantly larger over the past few decades in tandem with obesity rates. At present, the prevalence of obesity in the United States is nearly 42%.

Pay attention to the amount of food you eat at every sitting, and stop eating when you feel about 80% full. Limit starchy foods such as rice or potatoes to one-fourth of your plate, and fill half of your plate with leafy greens or other healthy vegetables.

Replace Salt with Indian Spices

Many people are tempted to reach for the salt shaker to flavor their foods, but eating high amounts of salt on a regular basis can lead to high blood pressure and a greater risk of heart disease.

Instead of using salt, start experimenting with heart-healthy spices. Evidence suggests that Indian spices, in particular, are high in antioxidants and contain properties that contribute to a healthy heart. Stock your pantry with garlic, curcumin, ginger, cinnamon, coriander, and black pepper, and look for recipes that use these spices.

Drink Alcohol in Moderation

Over time, high amounts of alcohol can cause the heart muscles to stretch and become larger. This can weaken your heart muscles and increase your risk for heart failure. Alcohol also increases your blood pressure.

Limit your alcohol intake to no more than two drinks a day if you're male and to one drink a day if you're female. If you tend to drink to relieve stress, look to other methods for stress relief, such as exercise, deep breathing, or mindfulness meditation. These behaviors can improve your general well-being in addition to helping you maintain a strong and healthy heart.

Dr. Parikh and Hunterdon Cardiovascular Associates are committed to providing the highest quality of care in a patient-centered environment. Our offices are conveniently located in Flemington, Clinton, and Bridgewater. We have subspecialty offices available to ensure our patients receive the proper care for their condition. Contact HCA today at (908) 788-1710 to make an appointment with Dr. Parikh or another one of our cardiologists.

Sources

https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/risk_factors.htm

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<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm>



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