

FEBRUARY 2024

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## HEALTHY WAYS TO HELP YOUR HEART

Chronic stress has been linked to high blood pressure, increased cholesterol and other health issues. Help protect your heart and overall well being by finding healthy ways to manage stress. Try these five tips to start.

### **Take a daily walk**

Block time on your calendar every day to get out, move and boost your mood.

### **Make a heart-healthy meal**

Try a new heart-healthy recipe at least once a week — one that includes fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains. Check out the recipe in the newsletter for a cooking idea!

### **Have a good laugh**

Listening to a comedy podcast or watching a funny TV show can help reduce levels of stress hormones in your body.

### **Unplug**

Allow yourself quiet time to relax with deep breathing, soothing music or a good book.

### **Set a timer for sleep**

Going to the bed at the same time every night can help you form healthier sleep habits and get a better night's rest.

# HEART DISEASE RISK QUIZ

## 1. What's your blood pressure?

- Below 120/80 (0)
- Between 120/80 and 140/90 (+1)
- Above 140/90 (+3)
- Don't know (+1)

## 2. What's your cholesterol?

- HDL above 50, LDL below 130, triglycerides less than 150 (0)
- Any of the following: HDL below 50, LDL above 130, triglycerides above 150 (+2)
- Don't know (+1)

## 3. How often do you eat fried foods?

- Once a month (+1)
- Several times a month (+2)
- Never (0)

## 4. Does anyone in your family have heart disease?

- Yes, my mother had problems before age 65, or my father before age 55 (+2)
- No (0)
- Don't know (+1)

## 5. On a typical weekend night, you:

- Have one glass of wine or beer (+1)
- Have more than one glass of alcohol (+2)
- Skip the alcohol (0)

## 6. How many cigarettes have you smoked this week?

- None (0)
- Just a few (+3)
- Half a pack or more each day (+8)

## 7. How many colors were in your last meal?

- 1 – for example, chicken and rice (+2)
- 2 to 4 – some vegetables (+1)
- 4 or more – for example, a salad and some vegetables (0)

## 8. How do you feel after climbing three flights of stairs?

- Fine or even energized (0)
- Winded (+1)
- Who knows? I never climb stairs (+2)

## 9. What's your body mass index (BMI)?

- 18.5 to 24.9 (0)
- 25 to 29.9 (+1)
- 30 or above (+2)

*See the results on the following page.*



## HEART DISEASE

Heart disease is a common term for coronary artery disease. It is the number one cause of death in both men and women over the age of 60 in the United States.

### Causes

Heart disease is caused by atherosclerosis—a buildup of plaque in the inner walls of the arteries—which narrows, slows or blocks the flow of blood to the heart.

### Risk Factors

Controllable risk factors for heart disease include the following:

- High blood pressure
- High LDL cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- Smoking
- Being overweight or obese
- Lack of physical activity
- Using illegal drugs, such as cocaine

### Warning Signs

The symptoms you experience depend on the type and severity of your heart condition. Common signs and symptoms of heart disease include the following:

- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Heart palpitations
- Weakness or fatigue

Call your doctor if you begin to have new symptoms or if they become more frequent or severe.

### Self-Care and Prevention

You can follow a healthy lifestyle to help prevent heart disease:

- Get regular medical check-ups.
- Don't smoke.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Follow a diet low in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol.
- Limit sodium intake to 1,500 to 2,400 milligrams per day.
- Exercise regularly.
- Manage stress by practicing relaxation techniques.
- Drink alcohol in moderation. Check with your doctor to find out if and how much you should drink.



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### HEALTHY LEMON GARLIC SALMON

**PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES | COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES**

#### Ingredients:

**Did you know that salmon and olive oil are both proven to reduce the risk of heart disease?**

According to Harvard Health, researchers found that people who consumed at least a half-teaspoon of olive oil a day have a 14% lower risk for heart disease compared with people who use no olive oil. Additionally, salmon is a great source of potassium which helps to control blood pressure and prevent excess fluid retention, which in turn can significantly reduce heart-related medical conditions. This recipe is a great way to incorporate both!

4 salmon portions skin-on  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil  
4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
8 garlic cloves crushed  
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill

#### Directions:

Season salmon portions with salt and pepper.

Heat a large heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add in olive oil and heat 30 seconds. Place salmon portions into the skillet, starting with the skin side up. Sear 3 to 4 minutes, then flip over and sear the other side 3 more minutes. Move salmon to one side of the pan.

Pour lemon juice into empty area of skillet and in garlic cloves and sauté 60 seconds. Spoon garlic lemon juice over salmon and cook until fish is cooked through and flakes easily with a fork.

Sprinkle fresh dill on top of salmon portions and serve immediately. Garnish with lemon slices if desired.

#### Results from Heart Risk Quiz:

**0-2:** You are on the right track to preventing heart disease. Exercise, eating right and avoiding cigarettes can help prevent 80 percent of heart disease.

**3-7:** One or two harmful habits can increase your chances of developing heart disease. Simply knowing your risk factors is also important to reducing your risk, especially if you need to reduce your cholesterol or blood pressure.

**8 or higher:** Get to the doctor! Make the commitment to one healthy behavior change, such as exercising or quitting smoking.