

Health tip: Healthy heart



What is heart disease?

Heart and blood vessel diseases make up cardiovascular disease also known as heart disease. Heart disease includes conditions that damage the heart such as:

- Coronary artery disease
- Heart attack
- Congestive heart failure
- Congenital heart disease
- Stroke

How common is heart disease?¹

- Every 34 seconds someone in the U.S. dies of a stroke, heart attack or other cardiovascular disease.
- Eighty percent of all heart disease and strokes could be prevented if people exercised more, ate healthier and stopped using tobacco.
- Cardiovascular disease, listed as the underlying cause of death, accounts for nearly 659,000 deaths in the U.S. each year. That's about 1 of every 3 deaths in the U.S.

Risk factors for heart disease

- Having high blood pressure is typically defined as having a systolic blood pressure reading between 130 and 139 mmHg or a diastolic reading between 80 and 89 mmHg.
- Having high cholesterol is defined as over 200 mg/dL.
- Having diabetes.
- Being overweight defined as having a body mass index (BMI) measurement over 25.
- Your hereditary background.

**Heart disease
remains the**

1

cause of death in the U.S.
for men and women

By living a healthier lifestyle you may help keep your weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels in a healthier range and lower your risk for heart disease.

To help keep a healthier heart:²

- Exercise regularly by aiming for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week.
- Eat a heart-healthy diet rich in whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Limit salt (sodium) in your diet to help lower your blood pressure.
- Limit added sugars in your diet to help lower your blood sugar level which may help manage diabetes.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Manage your blood pressure.
- Take control of your cholesterol.
- Limit your alcohol consumption which may raise your blood pressure. Men should have no more than 2 drinks per day, and women no more than 1 drink per day.
- Don't smoke.
- Practice healthier stress management techniques.
- Establish a relationship with a primary care physician, know your health numbers (BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose) and follow your doctor's advice.



Heart attack warning signs:

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweat
- Nausea
- Light headedness

If you, a loved one, friend or someone you witness is experiencing any of these symptoms, call 911 and get help.



Sources:

¹ CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/heart-disease/data-research/facts-stats>. 2024. Accessed June 2026.

² CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/heart-disease/prevention/index.html>. 2026. Accessed June 2026.

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