

# Women's *Heart Advantage*

## Heart Healthy Information: Women and Cholesterol

### What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is fat that is made by the body. It helps many parts of the body function normally. It protects nerves and is used by the body to make female hormones. But heart problems can occur when the blood has too much cholesterol.

### What causes high cholesterol levels?

There are several reasons for high cholesterol levels. The body may make more cholesterol than it needs, or you may have inherited a tendency to make too much cholesterol. You may also have a high cholesterol from eating too much of the wrong kinds of food.

### Why are high cholesterol levels a problem?

High cholesterol levels can double your risk for heart disease. A history of heart disease in your family adds to this risk. Other factors such as smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity or lack of exercise can also contribute to your risk of developing heart disease. The good news is that you can control your cholesterol levels.

### When should I have my cholesterol checked?

If any risk is present, you should have your cholesterol checked by the age of 20. If no risks are present, you should have your first cholesterol level drawn by the age of 45.

### What is the cholesterol test?

It is a simple blood test done first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. The cholesterol test measures the types of cholesterol and fat in your blood. Your doctor should review the following results with you:

- **Total Cholesterol** measures all the cholesterol in your blood. The goal is a level less than 200 mg/dl. Even more important are the following:
- **High Density Lipoprotein (HDL)** or (Highly Desirable Lipid) is the "good" cholesterol that removes cholesterol from the blood. Your goal should be a level greater than 50 mg/dl.
- **Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL)** or (Less Desirable Lipids) is the "bad" cholesterol that leads to fat buildup in blood vessels. Your goal should be a level less than 100 mg/dl.
- **Triglycerides** are fats made from the sugars, alcohol and carbohydrates you eat. Your goal should be a level less than 150 mg/dl.

### What can I do to improve my cholesterol levels?

There are three ways you can make your cholesterol levels better: diet, weight control and exercise.

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**Diet:** Eat more vegetables, fruits and whole grains, and use low or non-fat dairy products. You should also substitute olive oil, grapeseed, canola or safflower oil for butter, lard or solid-stick margarine. Avoid alcohol and sugary foods, as well as foods that contain saturated, hydrogenated, partially hydrogenated fats or trans fats. Read food labels to make healthy decisions.

**Weight control:** Maintain a healthy weight. Extra weight can increase your blood pressure, level of bad cholesterol and your chance of developing diabetes. Even reducing your weight by 10 percent can improve your health.

**Exercise:** Get 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. Using your large muscles (also called aerobic exercise) can result in weight loss, better cholesterol levels and a more normal blood sugar. Examples of aerobic exercises include brisk walking, bicycling, hiking and swimming. You should talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Family history has a very strong influence on your cholesterol levels. It's possible that you can follow all these suggestions and still need to take cholesterol-lowering medication. Talk with your doctor about your cholesterol levels. This will help you understand your cholesterol results and how to reach your goals.

Your health is your most important asset, and it's never too late to make positive changes.



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## Heart Healthy Information: Maintaining a Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight is a very important part of preventing heart disease. Being overweight increases your chances of developing other major health problems that can cause heart disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol. Too much weight also increases your chances for stroke, heart failure, gallbladder disease, arthritis, and breathing problems, as well as breast, colon, and other cancers. The bottom line: a healthy weight

can help to protect your health — and even save your life.

### Do you need to take off some pounds?

You can find out if you need to lose weight by taking these three simple steps.

### Step 1. Find out your Body Mass Index (BMI).

Your weight in relation to your height gives you a number called “body mass index.” Take a look at the chart below to determine your BMI.

	Normal Range				Overweight Range					Obese Range			
BMI	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
Height (inches)	Weight (pounds)												
4'10"	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158
4'11"	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163
5'0"	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168
5'1"	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174
5'2"	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180
5'3"	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186
5'4"	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192
5'5"	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198
5'6"	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204
5'7"	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211
5'8"	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216
5'9"	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223
5'10"	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229
5'11"	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236
6'0"	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	235	242
6'1"	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250
6'2"	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256
6'3"	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264

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(Weight is measured with underclothes and no shoes.)



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## What does your BMI mean?

**Normal weight:** BMI of 18.5 - 24.9.

Do not gain weight; you are in the normal range.

**Overweight:** BMI of 25 - 29.9.

Start a weight loss program, especially if your waistline is big. For heart healthy living, your goal is to maintain a normal weight with BMI of 18.5 - 24.9.

**Obese:** BMI is 30 or greater

You need to lose weight. Lose weight slowly — about 1/2 to 2 pounds a week. See your doctor or a nutritionist if you need help.

**Step 2. Measure your waistline.** For women, a waistline measurement of over 35 inches increases the risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other serious health problems. To measure your waist correctly, stand and place a tape measure around your middle just above your hipbones. Measure your waist just after you exhale.

**Step 3. Find out your other risk factors for heart disease.** It is important to know whether you have any of the following: high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol), low HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol), high triglycerides, high blood sugar, family history of heart disease, lack of exercise, or cigarette smoking.

If you are over the age of 55 or have gone through menopause you also are at greater risk for heart disease. If you are not sure whether you have some of these risk factors, consult with your doctor.

While you should talk to your doctor about whether or not you should lose weight, use the following to guide you:

- If you are overweight AND have two or more other risk factors, or if you are obese, you should lose weight.
- If you are overweight, have a waistline of over 35 inches, AND have other risk factors, you should lose weight.
- If you are overweight, but do not have a big waistline, and have fewer than two other risk factors, you should avoid gaining more weight.

### Small changes make a big difference

A small weight loss, just 5 to 10 percent of your current weight, will help to lower your risk of heart disease and other serious health problems. The best way to take off pounds is to do so slowly, by getting more exercise and eating a balanced diet that is low in calories and fat. Check with your doctor before starting a weight loss program.



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# Women's *Heart Advantage*

## Heart Healthy Information: Diabetes and Reducing Your Risk

Women with diabetes have a higher chance of having heart disease and a stroke. About 9 million women in the U.S. have diabetes, and about one-third don't even know they have the disease. The chance of having heart disease increases when diabetes is not noticed or treated. Women with diabetes have a greater risk of death related to heart disease and stroke than men.

### What is diabetes?

Certain foods you eat turn into sugar to give your body fuel and energy. Insulin, which is made by the body, is needed to get the sugar to work. In diabetes, the body doesn't make insulin (type 1) or doesn't use insulin the way it should (insulin resistance/type 2). Without insulin, your body cannot use the food you eat, your body will not work well, and blood sugar will rise. High blood sugar can cause kidney problems, blindness, infections, and nerve problems. Diabetes, which can increase bad cholesterol levels, can also cause high blood pressure. Heart attacks are more common and more serious in people with diabetes.

In type 1 diabetes, you may notice you are thirsty, hungry, tired, urinating more than normal, losing weight, not seeing as well and getting sick. With type 2 diabetes, these symptoms develop more slowly and may be harder to notice. That's why it's often undetected and untreated.

### Are you at risk?

Take care of yourself. It's important to know if you could develop diabetes. You should get tested if you answer *yes* to one of the following questions:

- Are you over 45 years old?
- Are you Hispanic or African American, American Indian, Asian American or Pacific Islander?
- Are you overweight or obese (especially if you have extra weight around your middle)?
- Do you refrain from physical activity?
- Are you a woman who had diabetes during pregnancy?
- Are you a woman who had a baby weighing more than 9 pounds at birth?
- Do you have a family history of diabetes?

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## What you can do to decrease your risk of diabetes

If you think you could have diabetes, you should have a blood sugar test (glucose test done in a laboratory). Diabetes is defined as a blood sugar of 126 mg/dL or more.

You may prevent diabetes and heart disease if you do the following:

- **Lose weight:** Too much fat makes your body work harder to make insulin. The heart has to work hard too! Follow a low fat, low calorie, less sugar and low carbohydrate diet. People who lost about 10 to 15 pounds decreased their chance of getting diabetes by 58 percent. Staying at a healthy weight decreases the risk of diabetes and heart disease.
- **Be active (30 minutes most days a week):** Regular physical exercise helps lower insulin resistance allowing your body to use its own insulin better. Physical exercise also decreases blood pressure and decreases heart attack and stroke.
- **Stop smoking:** Tobacco increases the chance of heart disease and stroke by increasing heart rate, narrowing blood vessels and increasing blood pressure. When you smoke, the amount of oxygen to the heart is decreased.
- **Other ways to lower risk:** Keep your blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure within normal limits.

## If you have diabetes

Making a few changes can help you live a healthy, normal life if you have diabetes.

Three key steps, known as the ABC's of diabetes, can help lower your chance of having diabetes related problems including heart attack and stroke.

- **A** is for A1c test, known as hemoglobin A1c, which should be done twice a year. It measures the average blood glucose over the last 3 months. Goal is below 7 percent.
- **B** is for blood pressure. Keeping your blood pressure below 120/80 decreases the amount of work on the heart and also reduces kidney problems.
- **C** is for cholesterol. Bad cholesterol, or LDL, clogs your blood vessels and increases your risk of heart disease. The LDL goal is less than 100 mg/dl.

The following are ways to keep the ABC's of diabetes under control:

- Lose weight and stay at a healthy weight by eating a diet low in fat, sugar, calories, carbohydrates, and high in fiber. See a dietitian to develop a weight loss program and get tips for a healthy diet.
- Exercise for 30 minutes most days a week to decrease insulin needs and to lower blood levels.
- Take your medicine as ordered, and test your blood sugar levels.
- Stop smoking to help improve your blood vessels and heart.



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## Heart Healthy Information: High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a common problem for women. More than half of all women over age 55 have high blood pressure.

High blood pressure is called the “silent killer” because it usually does not cause warning symptoms. High blood pressure is dangerous because it makes the heart work too hard. Over time it hurts your heart, blood vessels, kidneys, brain and eyes. Even slightly high levels increase your risk for these problems. The good news is that you can do something to manage high blood pressure and avoid many serious problems.

### What is blood pressure?

As blood is pumped from your heart through your body, the blood puts pressure against the blood vessel walls. Your blood pressure measures this pressure. When the number goes above a certain point, it is called high blood pressure. Blood pressure is expressed as two numbers, such as 110/70. The top number is the systolic blood pressure, and it is created by the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats. The bottom number or diastolic blood pressure, is the pressure in between heartbeats.

Blood pressure changes a lot. Your doctor may check it on several different days before deciding if it is too high. Blood pressure is considered “high” when it stays above normal levels over time.

### Blood pressure: How high is too high?

The recommended blood pressure is less than 120/80. Therefore, your blood pressure is too high if your top number (systolic blood pressure) is 120 or higher OR if your bottom number (diastolic pressure) is 80 or higher. Treatment is recommended even if only one of the numbers is too high.

### What are the risk factors that contribute to high blood pressure?

The cause of high blood pressure is unknown for most people, however, we do know that certain things make a person more likely to develop high blood pressure. Some of these things you have control over, such as eating too much salt or being overweight. Not exercising and drinking too much alcohol can also increase your chances for high blood pressure. There are also some things you cannot change such as family history, high blood pressure, racial background and gender.

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High blood pressure is also more common in African American women than it is in white women. Men have a greater risk up until age 55. After age 74, women are more likely than men to have high blood pressure.

### **Can high blood pressure be prevented?**

You can help to manage high blood pressure by doing the following:

- Managing your weight or losing weight if you are overweight
- Exercising regularly — 30 minutes a day for most days of the week
- Limiting salt (sodium) to less than 2,400 mg a day (1 teaspoon of salt)
- Eating more fruits and vegetables, and low fat or nonfat dairy products
- Limiting amounts of saturated fat and total fat. Eat foods rich in potassium
- Drinking no more than one alcoholic drink a day (women)
- Getting regular blood pressure checks if you are taking birth control pills, estrogen or hormone therapy

### **What if I need medication to control my blood pressure?**

If your blood pressure remains high even after you make changes in your lifestyle such as diet and exercise, your doctor will probably order medicine. However, changes in your life will help the medicine work better and may reduce the amount of medicine that you need.

### **A reminder:**

**It's important to take medication exactly as your doctor has ordered. Make sure you understand how much medicine you should take each day and how often before you leave your doctor's office. Let your doctor know if you notice any side effects.**



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# Women's *Heart Advantage*

## Heart Healthy Information: Women and Cigarettes

Cigarette smoking has been described as “the most important health risk in this country.” Women who smoke are up to six times more likely to suffer a heart attack than nonsmoking women. They also have an increased risk of suffering a stroke.

Cigarette smoking greatly increases the chances that a woman will develop lung cancer. Lung cancer has increased 500 percent in women in the last 20 years, and more women die of it than breast cancer. Second-hand smoke also causes numerous health problems in family, friends and co-workers.

There is simply **no safe way to smoke**. Though low-tar and low-nicotine cigarettes may reduce the lung cancer risk, they *do not* reduce the chance of heart disease or other smoking-related diseases.

### **Why kick the habit?**

The good news is that quitting smoking greatly reduces the chance of heart disease and other serious disorders. Just one year after quitting smoking, the risk of heart disease will drop by about half. After several years, the risk is about the same for women who never smoked. If you already have heart disease or have had a heart attack, giving up cigarettes

will lower your risk of a first or second heart attack.

### **How does one cigarette hurt?**

Just one cigarette can keep the heart from using oxygen properly for up to 24 hours. It releases enough poison to make the side of a blood vessel wall in the heart rough, which will start or increase the narrowing of the blood vessel and reduce the blood flow to the heart muscle and the body.

### **Women who smoke**

Women who smoke and use birth control pills are up to 20 times more likely to suffer from heart disease and have a greater risk for stroke than nonsmokers. Smoking causes lower hormone levels in women, which can cause menstrual problems, early menopause and bone weakness. Smoking also causes the average woman to die 14.5 years earlier than nonsmoking women.

In addition, women who smoke have more wrinkles and look older. They have three times higher risk of developing heart disease and lung cancer than men who smoke. Women also have a much higher level of damage to their lungs and heart, causing more diseases.

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## How to quit

### Get ready to quit —

This is an important first step, and you must be motivated.

### Line up support —

Ask friends and family to help you quit.

### Avoid smoking traps —

Know and avoid situations where you would normally smoke.

### Find new habits —

Replace the traps with those not associated with smoking.

### Keep busy —

Do activities with your hands, such as needlework or jigsaw puzzles.

### Find other “mouth” activities —

Eat vegetable sticks, apple slices or chew sugarless gum.

### Keep moving —

Walk, garden, bike, or do some yoga stretches. Being active makes you feel better and helps to prevent weight gain.

### Know what to expect —

In the first week, you may experience temporary withdrawal symptoms, such as headaches, irritability, tiredness, and trouble concentrating. These are signs that your body is recovering from the effects of smoking and will most likely end within two to four weeks.

### Ask for help —

The American Lung Association and the American Cancer Society, hospitals, offices and community groups have programs for support.

### Be good to yourself —

Get plenty of rest, drink lots of water, and eat three healthy meals daily. Congratulate yourself for making a major, positive change in your life.

### If you “Slip” — it’s not unusual —

Get right back on the nonsmoking track:

#### Don’t be discouraged —

It doesn’t mean you can’t quit.

Keep thinking of yourself as a nonsmoker.

You are one.

#### Learn from experience —

What made you light a cigarette? Avoid it in the future.

#### Take charge —

Decide what you can do the next time you want to smoke to keep you from doing it again.

### Aids for quitting —

From nicotine gum to patches and medications, there are options available to help you quit smoking. Some are covered by insurance. Talk to your doctor about your choices.

### A weight concern —

Most ex-smokers gain less than 10 pounds. Choose lower calorie foods and increase physical activity.



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## Heart Healthy Information: Hormone Therapy

Choosing whether to use hormone replacement is one of the most important health decisions women make. Many women have taken hormones to try to lower their chance of heart disease. But new information shows that taking some types of hormones may actually increase a woman's chances of developing heart disease and other serious conditions.

Studies show that women taking some types of hormone replacement are more likely to have serious health problems, which include heart attacks, strokes, blood clots and breast cancer. Hormones did help some women by decreasing their chance of hip fractures and colon cancer. Overall, however, the risks outweigh the benefits.

If you take hormones, or are considering it, here are some guidelines you should follow:

- You should not continue or start hormones to prevent heart disease. Talk with your doctor about other ways of preventing heart

disease. This may include exercise, diet changes or drugs to lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

- If you're taking, or thinking about taking hormones to prevent bone loss, talk with your doctor. Think about other treatments that can prevent bone loss and bone fractures.
- If you're taking, or thinking about taking hormones to treat hot flashes or sleeping problems, talk with your doctor. The short-term effects of using this drug for these types of symptoms is unclear. If you take hormones to control these symptoms, use as little as possible for as short a time.

Whatever you decide, talk regularly with your doctor because your risks may change over time. Safer and more effective treatments may become available. Stay informed.



# Women's *Heart Advantage*

## Heart Healthy Information: Exercising for a Healthy Heart

### Are you exercising enough?

Women do not get enough exercise. In fact, 60 percent of women in the U.S. don't get the recommended amount of exercise. Lack of exercise increases the chance that you will gain weight and develop high blood pressure and diabetes — which may lead to heart disease. This could mean more doctors' visits, hospitalizations and use of medications. For older women, lack of exercise also increases the risk of breaking bones.

### What you can do

As little as 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week gives your heart a great deal of protection. Regular exercise can help with the following:

- Lower blood pressure
- Improve circulation
- Reduce blood clots
- Improve quality of sleep
- Increase muscular strength
- Improve stamina/endurance
- Decrease stress
- Increase your ability to burn calories
- Improve feeling of well-being
- Reduce body fat
- Increase HDL (good cholesterol)
- Decrease constipation

Regular exercise is a powerful way to reduce your chance of heart disease.

### Getting started

1. Check with your doctor to make sure you are OK to start an exercise program. If you are over 60 or have cardiac risk factors, you may need testing before beginning a regular exercise program.
2. **Start slowly**
  - Warm-up 5 minutes before exercising by stretching and walking slowly.
  - Start out with 10 minutes of moderate exercise such as walking. Over two to three weeks, you should be able to increase to 30 to 40 minutes.
  - Engage in activities such as walking, biking, dancing or swimming.
3. **Add weight training to your exercise program**

Strength training two to three times per week can create stronger muscles and help reduce the risk of weak bones and falls. This should only take you 10 to 15 minutes.

  - Use low-level weights for arms (1 to 5 pounds), slightly more for legs.
  - Start with one set of repetitions 12 to 15

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times for each exercise.

- Slowly build your weight program so you can do three sets of 15 repetitions.
- Never hold your breath; always continue to breathe rhythmically. If you are holding your breath, you are lifting too much weight.

#### 4. **Be safe**

- Wait 30 to 60 minutes after eating.
- Don't smoke before, during, or after exercise...  
**DON'T SMOKE AT ALL!**
- Drink enough water before, during and after exercise — at least 8 ounces before and after exercise.
- Avoid exercising outside in extreme heat or cold.
- Wear good, light-weight supportive rubber-soled shoes.
- Wear light clothing.
- Listen to your body. If it hurts, if you are dizzy, or if you are too short of breath (can't talk easily) STOP. Talk to your doctor. Remember to do 5 minutes of stretches, before and after exercising, (warm-ups and cool-downs) to decrease the risk of injury

and muscle aches.

#### 5. **Stick with your exercise program**

- Choose activities that you enjoy
- To help keep you motivated, find someone of the same activity level and exercise with them.
- Do not push too hard.
- Stay active. Use the stairs, walk the dog, and park the car as far as you can from the store.
- Don't compare yourself to others.
- Give yourself rewards for staying with an exercise program.
- Vary your activities to provide cross training, and avoid being bored.



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# Women's *Heart Advantage*

## Heart Healthy Information: Stress and Depression

Many women are worried about a link between stress and heart disease. Stress is known to contribute to heart problems and the risk of death. Emotional upset, especially anger, is the "trigger" reported most often for a heart attack. People with more stress and worries also have more problems after a heart attack.

Depression is another risk factor for heart disease. In fact, women who are depressed are twice as likely to develop heart disease than those who are not. Depression is common in both women and men after a heart attack.

### What is stress?

Stress refers to the body's response to change. Not all stress is bad. The most important thing is to manage stress properly. People often feel stress in response to job troubles, arguments with family or friends or social isolation. All people feel stress sometimes, but people react to stress in different ways. For example, some people might feel a lot of stress when driving, while others might find driving relaxing.

### How does stress affect my heart?

Stress can have several effects on your body. When you are under stress, your muscles tense, your blood pressure rises, and your heart beats faster, which makes your heart work harder. There is a link between developing heart disease and the factors that often cause stress. No one knows if stress directly causes heart disease, but it can change chemicals in your body that contribute to the disease. Stress may also contribute to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, overeating, and lack of exercise, which can lead to heart disease. Stress is a greater concern, however, for people who already have heart disease. People with heart disease may experience chest pain when they are under stress. Also, if you have clogged arteries, your heart may not get the extra blood it needs during stress. This may lead to inadequate oxygen levels in your heart.

### How can I manage my stress or depression?

Good health habits can have a protective effect against stress and depression. Regular physical activity relieves stress and depression and lowers the chance of heart disease.

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Sutter Heart Institute

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Taking part in a stress management program may decrease the chance of more heart problems for those who have heart disease. By attending stress management programs, you can come up with new ways of facing every-day challenges.

Some ways you can lower your stress include:

- Taking a deep breath—this helps your muscles relax
- Closing your eyes and resting
- Thinking of relaxing things
- Exercising or taking a walk
- Eating right—limit foods with fat, sugar, and salt

- Talking to a friend about your troubles
- Changing the things that cause you to stress
- Focus on the good things in your life!

If you find yourself feeling down or “blue” for a long time, talk with your doctor about how to get help. Keep in mind that help from family, friends, and other heart patients can help. Exercise is a great way to help reduce depression as well as stress. Check with your doctor before taking any over-the-counter remedies.

Ask your health care team or doctor for additional suggestions about how to manage your stress or depression.

### How do I know if I have stress or depression?

Signs of stress and depression are very similar and may include:

Stress	Depression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in sleeping patterns, such as inability to sleep or a need to sleep too much</li> <li>• Mood swings</li> <li>• Feeling angry, afraid, nervous or helpless</li> <li>• Crying frequently</li> <li>• Lack of energy</li> <li>• Unusual eating patterns, such as eating too much or a loss of appetite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to sleep, early-morning waking or oversleeping</li> <li>• Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood</li> <li>• Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism</li> <li>• Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness</li> <li>• Decreased energy, fatigue</li> <li>• Appetite and/or weight changes</li> <li>• Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating</li> <li>• Restlessness, irritability</li> </ul>



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# Women's *Heart Advantage*

## Heart Healthy Information: Heart Healthy Diet

Here are some general diet guidelines to help keep your heart healthy:

- Your diet should include a variety of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low fat or nonfat dairy products, fish, legumes, lean poultry and meats.
- Do not eat more calories than your body needs to maintain a healthy weight.
  - To lose weight, you need to cut calories and increase your level of activity.
  - One pound equals 3,500 calories.
  - A healthy weight loss is 1 to 2 pounds per week. To achieve this, you need to reduce your intake by 500 calories per day.
  - See the chart below to determine your caloric needs:
- Reduce use of saturated fat and cholesterol (animal fats).
- Use limited amounts of unsaturated fats. Use monounsaturated fat such as olive, and canola, oils & cashews, and/or polyunsaturated fat such as sunflower, corn, safflower, soy bean oils, and walnuts and pecans.
- Reduce use of products made with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils such as margarine, cookies, cakes and donuts. Read the ingredients carefully.
- Limit salt, sugars and sweets.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Eat three to six small meals per day.
- Eat high fiber foods including fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains.

**(Body Weight x Activity Level = calories needed to maintain current weight)**

\*Example: 135 pounds x 12 calories = 1,620 calories/day to maintain weight

Level of Activity	Calories Needed per Pound per Day
Inactive (couch potato)	10
Active (housework, gardening)	12
Very Active (exercise five times a week)	14
Extremely Active (trained athlete)	16

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General Serving Guidelines For Women

(For 1,600 Calories/day)

Type	Servings/Day	What is a serving
Bread, Cereal, Rice, Pasta	6	1 slice of bread, 1/2 bagel, 1oz. dry cereal, 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta
Vegetables	3	1/2 cup cooked or chopped raw vegetables 1 cup raw leafy vegetables 1 medium potato
Fruits	2	1 fist sized piece of fresh fruit, 3/4 cup juice, 1/2 cup canned fruit
Dairy (low fat/nonfat)	2-3	1 cup milk/yogurt, 1-1/2 oz. cheese, 1/2 cup cottage cheese
Meat, Fish, Poultry, Beans, Eggs	2	2-3 oz. cooked lean meat—size of deck of cards 2 Tbsp. peanut butter 1 egg 1/2 cup cooked beans
Fats (mayonnaise, oil, butter)	4	1 tsp.

**Read food labels**

Reading the food label can help you choose healthy foods. Here are some tips on how to use labels to choose foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

• **Free**

This claim means that a food contains no amount (or very small amount) of these nutrients: fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, sugar and calories.

• **Low**

This claim can be used on all foods that can be eaten often without going over the limit for one or more of these nutrients: saturated fat, cholesterol, fat, sodium and calories.

- ♥ Low-saturated fat = 1 gram or less per serving
- ♥ Low fat = 3 grams or less per serving
- ♥ Low-cholesterol = 20 mg or less and 2 grams or less saturated fat per serving
- ♥ Low-sodium = 140 mg or less per serving
- ♥ Low-calorie = 40 calories or less per serving

Other words that mean “low” include: “little,” “few,” and “low source of.”

- **Light in sodium.** Fifty percent less sodium than the regular version.
- **Lean and extra lean:** These claims can be used to describe the saturated fat and fat content of meat, poultry, seafood and game meats.
- ♥ **Lean:** Less than 10 grams of total fat and 4.5 grams or less of saturated fat, and less than 95 mg of cholesterol per serving.
- ♥ **Extra lean:** Less than 5 grams of total fat, less than 2 grams of saturated fat, and less than 95 mg of cholesterol per serving.

*Serving size is also very important. Read the food label to understand the recommended serving size and the number of servings. Here are some easy ways to remember healthy portion sizes:*

- Your fist = a cup**
- Your thumb = 1 tablespoon**
- Your palm = 3 ounce**
- The tip of your thumb = 1 teaspoon**



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