

In Good Health



Coronary Heart Disease



Coronary Heart Disease is the most common form of heart disease. It is one of the leading causes of death in Australia and is also a major cause of disability.

If you have coronary heart disease your heart's blood supply is blocked or interrupted by a build-up of fatty substances in the coronary arteries. If these arteries become too clogged, the restriction of blood supply to the heart can cause angina (chest pains). If the coronary arteries become completely blocked it can cause a heart attack.

RISK FACTORS

There is no single cause of the disease but there are certain risk factors that can increase your chance of developing it. Your risk of developing coronary heart disease is significantly increased if you:

- Smoke
- Have high blood pressure
- Have high blood cholesterol
- Do not take regular exercise
- Are overweight
- Have diabetes
- Have a family history of coronary heart disease
- Are male
- Are over the age of 70

While some of these risk factors such as age and gender can't be changed, the good news is that there are many steps you can take to reduce your risk of developing the disease.

PREVENTION

These five heart-healthy strategies can help you protect your heart from disease:

- 1. Don't smoke** – Smoking is a major risk factor for hardening and narrowing the arteries. If you quit smoking your risk of developing heart disease will drop dramatically.
- 2. Get Active** – Physical activity helps you control your weight and can reduce your chances of developing other conditions that may put a strain on your heart. You should engage in moderate intensity

physical exercise, for at least 30 minutes a day on at least five days of the week.

- 3. Eat a heart-healthy diet** – Eat a diet that is low in saturated fat, sugar and salt, and includes plenty of fruit and vegetables. Legumes, low-fat sources of protein and certain types of fish can also reduce your risk of heart disease.
- 4. Maintain a healthy weight** – Excess weight can lead to conditions that increase your chances of developing heart disease such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Your doctor will be able to tell you what your ideal weight is in relation to your build and height.
- 5. Get regular health checks** – You should get your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked regularly by your doctor to determine whether you need to take action.

For more information visit the Australian Heart Foundation website at www.heartfoundation.org.au

Resistance Training



Resistance training is any form of exercise that causes the muscles to contract against an external resistance. When performed properly and undertaken regularly, resistance training can increase muscle strength, tone, mass and endurance.

Examples of some of the different types of resistance training include:

- **Free weights** – Classic strength training tools such as dumbbells or barbells. You could also try homemade weights such as plastic drink bottles filled with water or sand.
- **Weight machines** – Most fitness centres offer a variety of weight machines. These devices usually have adjustable seats with handles attached to either weights or hydraulics.
- **Resistance bands or tubes** – There are different versions of these exercise tools,

some with handles, some without. Essentially they act like giant rubber bands providing continuous resistance throughout a movement. The bands are very versatile, can be used anywhere and are usually inexpensive.

- **Own body weight** – Your own body weight can be pitted against gravity by doing exercises such as push-ups, chin-ups and abdominal crunches. You can do these exercises just about anywhere and it doesn't cost you anything.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Properly performed, resistance training can provide a range of physical and mental health benefits including:

- Improved muscle strength and tone
- Increased bone density and strength
- Weight control
- Prevention and control of chronic conditions
- Reduced risk of injury
- Increased stamina
- Improved sense of well-being
- Improved sleep patterns

Resistance training can be dangerous if your technique is incorrect or you try to lift weights that are too heavy for you. It is important to consult a physiotherapist, exercise rehabilitation professional or a qualified gym instructor before starting a new programme. They can show you how to perform exercises using the correct technique and can advise you on the best resistance training programme to suit your needs.

Protecting Your **BACK**

Keeping your back fit and healthy and protecting it from injury can help you reduce the risk of suffering from chronic back pain. It can also help to reduce the impact back pain has on your life if it does occur. The following tips will help you to look after your back and help to keep it healthy and strong:

- **Exercise your back regularly** – Low-impact aerobic activities such as walking and swimming are excellent ways to strengthen the muscles in your back.
- **Keep your back flexible** – Regular stretching can help improve the flexibility in your back. Activities such as yoga and tai-chi can be helpful. Talk with your doctor about which stretches/activities are best for you.
- **Maintain a good posture** – Avoid walking with your shoulders hunched or slumping in your chair. Choose a seat with a good lower back

support and a swivel base. Try to change your position every few minutes when sitting or standing for long periods of time.

- **Use the correct technique when lifting and carrying heavy objects** – Keep your back straight and bend only at the knees. Always lift and carry objects close to your body. Avoid lifting and twisting at the same time. If the item is very heavy or awkward to carry, ask someone to help or use manual handling aids.
- **Maintain a healthy weight** – Being overweight can put extra strain on your back muscles.
- **Quit smoking** – It is thought that smoking reduces blood flow to the blood vessels in the lower back which may lead to degeneration of the discs between the vertebrae.

How to Choose a Healthy Breakfast

Lots of people claim they skip breakfast because they don't have enough time, or simply because they don't feel like eating so early in the morning. But breakfast is definitely worth finding time for.

A healthy breakfast breaks the overnight fasting period and provides us with the energy we need to face the day. It also provides us with essential vitamins and minerals and helps set the stage for your eating habits throughout the rest of the day.

What to include:

A healthy breakfast is one which provides a variety of foods, is low in saturated fat, high in carbohydrates, contains fibre, and provides vitamins and minerals. To get this combination you should try and include one or two foods from each of the following categories:

- **Whole grains** – options include wholegrain cereals, wholemeal or wholegrain rolls, oatmeal and wholegrain crispbreads.
- **Fruit and vegetables** – Options include fresh fruit and vegetables such as apples, bananas, oranges, carrots, avocados, tomatoes and mushrooms. Fruit juices that are 100% juice without added sugar.
- **Low-fat dairy products** – Options include skim milk, low-fat cheeses such as cottage cheese and ricotta, low-fat yoghurts.
- **Low-fat protein** – Options include poached or boiled eggs, fish, lean meat and poultry.

Healthy Breakfast Ideas

- A bowl of wholegrain cereal topped with sliced fruit and low-fat or skim milk.
- A smoothie blended from fruits, low-fat yoghurt, milk and honey.
- Poached or boiled eggs served on wholemeal toast with a glass of fruit juice.
- Multigrain pancakes topped with berries and low-fat yoghurt.
- Wholegrain bagel topped with smoked salmon and low-fat cottage cheese.
- Wholemeal or wholegrain toast topped with avocado, tomato and low-fat melted cheese.



Flu Vaccinations

Influenza, commonly known as the flu is a highly contagious viral infection. Symptoms include headache, sore throat, high fever, tiredness, coughing, and muscle and joint pains. Although rare, flu can increase the risk of serious complications or death as a result of the underlying infection. You are more at risk of developing serious complications if you are:

- Over 65 years of age.
- A severe asthmatic.
- Have chronic heart disease, lung disease or a neurological condition.
- Have impaired immunity or a chronic illness such as diabetes or kidney disease.
- Pregnant.
- An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person over 50 years of age, or aged 15-49 with risk factors.
- A health-care worker or resident of a nursing home or long-term care facility.

It is important to protect yourself against the flu virus particularly if you belong to one of these high-risk groups. Vaccination provides the most effective protection against the flu as it allows the body to build up immunity to the virus and avoid infection.

The best time to get vaccinated is between March and May before the onset of the flu season in winter. Protection develops about two weeks after the injection and immunity lasts for up to one year. The vaccination is safe and cannot give you a dose of the flu as it contains no live virus.

For more information visit the InFLUenza website at www.fightflu.gov.au

Avoiding the Flu

- Get an annual flu vaccine
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose.
- Dispose of used tissues into the bin immediately.
- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid physical contact with others and stay at home if you develop flu symptoms.

Weight Loss



Your body uses the food you eat as energy for daily activities and cell maintenance. Any excess energy is stored by the body as fat. This means if you consume more energy than you use, you will gain weight. On the other hand, if you use more energy than you consume, you will lose weight.

The key to successful weight loss is combining a healthy, balanced diet and regular physical activity. Fad diets that eliminate whole food groups or promise rapid, effortless weight loss are best avoided. Although you may lose weight initially, these diets are often difficult to follow in the long term and you may be losing out on essential nutrients.

Continual cycles of dieting, weight loss and weight gain are called 'yo-yo' dieting. Yo-yo diets do not help you to maintain a healthy body weight and can slow down your metabolism. Making small but permanent changes to the way you eat and exercise is the best way to lose weight healthily and keep it off.



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Weight Loss Tips

- **Cut Calories** – Fat has more than double the calories of protein and carbohydrates. You should reduce the amount of high-fat foods in your diet and choose lower or fat-reduced options. Use cooking oil and spreads sparingly and remove excess fat from meats.
- **Reduce portion sizes** – Portion sizes have increased over the years especially when it comes to ready meals and snack foods. Eat smaller portions of potatoes, pasta, rice and fatty or sugary foods and eat bigger portions of fruit and vegetables. Stop eating as soon as your hunger is satisfied.
- **Keep a balanced diet** – Eat a wide variety of food from all food groups including bread and cereals, vegetables, fruit, milk and dairy, meat, fish and legumes.
- **Don't skip meals** – If you skip meals you may find you eat more when you do eat which can lead to a larger stomach capacity. This can then increase the amount of food you need at each meal to feel full. You should aim to have six small, frequent meals and snacks rather than three large meals a day.
- **Cut down alcohol and sugary drinks** – Alcohol and sugary drinks are high in calories and low in nutrients. Drink plenty of water instead and have a glass before you start each meal.
- **Get Active** – Regular exercise will not only help you to lose weight but can also reduce the risk of you developing certain chronic diseases. You should aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on at least five days of the week. Suggestions for a more active lifestyle include playing a sport that you enjoy, walking instead of taking the car, taking the stairs instead of the lift, gardening, cycling and mowing the lawn.

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