

# Physical Activity and Nutrition

## FACTS:

- If you are physically inactive, you're much more likely to develop heart disease, have a stroke, or other blood vessel diseases.
- Regular, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity improves your cardiovascular fitness and helps reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, and other chronic diseases.
- For most healthy people, the American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most or all days of the week. The time may be broken into shorter periods. If you've been inactive, you can start with 10 minutes of exercise, then work up to more.
- You don't have to be an athlete to lower your risk! Regular activities such as walking, gardening, biking, housework, or dancing can be planned in your daily routine.
- Along with a healthy weight and regular physical activity, an overall healthy diet can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels and prevent obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.
- A healthy diet includes eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, lowering or cutting out added salt or sodium, and eating less saturated fat and cholesterol.

Healthy Hearts Month

## RESOURCES:

**American Heart Association**

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa)

**Go Red For Women**

[www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org)

**Michigan Department of Community Health**

[www.michigan.gov/cvh](http://www.michigan.gov/cvh)

**Michigan Steps Up**

[www.michiganstepsup.org](http://www.michiganstepsup.org)

**National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute**

[www.nhlbi.org](http://www.nhlbi.org)



## **BENEFITS OF DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:**

- Reduces the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure by improving blood circulation throughout the body.
- Keeps weight under control.
- Improves blood cholesterol levels.
- Prevents and manages high blood pressure.
- Prevents bone loss and helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
- Boosts energy level.
- Helps manage stress.
- Improves the ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well.
- Improves self-image.
- Counters anxiety and depression and increases enthusiasm and optimism.
- Increases muscle strength, thereby improving the ability to do other physical activities.
- Provides a way to share an activity with family and friends.
- Establishes good heart-healthy habits in children and counters the conditions (obesity, high blood pressure, poor cholesterol levels, poor lifestyle habits, etc.) that lead to heart attack and stroke later in life.
- In older people, helps delay or prevent chronic illnesses and diseases associated with aging and maintains quality of life and independence longer.

## **SUGGESTED DIETARY GUIDELINES:**

- Consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages within and among the basic food groups to get the energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber needed for good health.
- Choose a diet with plenty of whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free milk products, vegetables, and fruits.
- Limit intake of fats and oils high in saturated and/or trans fats, and choose products low in such fats and oils to reduce risk of health attack and heart disease.
- Replace sugar-sweetened beverages with water or low-calorie beverages.
- Choose and prepare foods with little salt.
- Consume potassium-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, to prevent or delay the onset of high blood pressure and even lower elevated blood pressure.