

# SAFETY BULLETIN – Heart Health Month

February is American Heart Health Month. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women, but heart disease is preventable and controllable. Below are some heart disease prevention tips from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- **Eat a healthy diet.** Choosing healthful meal and snack options can help you avoid heart disease and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables—adults should have at least 5 servings each day. Eating foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol and high in fiber can help prevent high cholesterol. Limiting [salt or sodium](#) in your diet also can lower your blood pressure. For more information on healthy diet and nutrition, visit [CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Web site](#) and [ChooseMyPlate.gov](#).



- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese can increase your risk for heart disease. To determine whether your weight is in a healthy range, doctors often calculate a number called the [body mass index](#) (BMI). Doctors sometimes also use waist and hip measurements to measure a person's body fat. If you know your weight and height, you can calculate your BMI at [CDC's Assessing Your Weight Web site](#).

- **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure. The Surgeon General recommends that adults should engage in moderate-intensity exercise for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. For more information, see [CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Web site](#).



- **Monitor your blood pressure.** High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so be sure to have it checked on a regular basis. You can check your blood pressure at home, at a pharmacy, or at a doctor's office. Find more information at [CDC's High Blood Pressure Web site](#).

- **Don't smoke.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quit as soon as possible. Your doctor can suggest ways to help you quit. For more information about tobacco use and quitting, see [CDC's Smoking & Tobacco Use Web site](#) and [Smokefree.gov](#).



- **Limit alcohol use.** Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can increase your blood pressure. Men should stick to no more than two drinks per day, and women to no more than one. For more information, visit [CDC's Alcohol and Public Health Web site](#).

- **Have your cholesterol checked.** Your health care provider should test your cholesterol levels at least once every 5 years. Talk with your doctor about this simple blood test. You can find out more from [CDC's High Cholesterol Web site](#).

- **Manage your diabetes.** If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels closely, and talk with your doctor about treatment options. Visit [CDC's Diabetes Public Health Resource](#) for more information.

- **Take your medicine.** If you're taking medication to treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don't understand something.



For more ideas about simple steps to take every day for better heart health, visit the CDC's [full page of heart health tips](#).