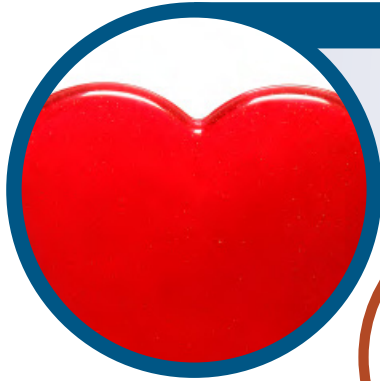


## Monthly Health Challenge™

# Be Heart Healthy



**CHALLENGE**  
Develop healthy habits to protect your heart

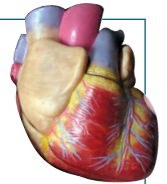
### Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Be Heart Healthy."
2. Practice heart healthy habits on at least 22 days this month.
3. Keep this habit for a lifetime of good health!

How much do you know about heart health? Take this quiz to find out.

Y N

1.   Is your blood pressure 120/80 or higher?
2.   Do you eat red meat?
3.   Is getting regular exercise hard for you?
4.   Do you have a family history of heart disease?
5.   Are you overweight or obese?
6.   Do you smoke or have exposure to secondhand smoke?



If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, you could learn more about healthy habits that protect your heart. Routine check-ups to measure blood pressure, blood fats, and weight can help you know what habit changes will improve heart health.



Chances are, you've heard of late-night talk show host David Letterman. He recently retired after a long career on TV. He interviewed superstars, politicians,

and other famous people. He told funny jokes and talked about the news. But did you know he survived major heart surgery?

Midway through his career, a routine test showed his cholesterol levels were almost three times higher than normal. With a family history of heart problems, Letterman wasn't about to ignore the warning signs.

Five blood vessels in his heart were blocked. Doctors performed a quintuple-bypass. Five weeks later, he returned to TV. He started eating better and resumed running to make his heart stronger. He lost 30 pounds! And he hosted *The Late Show* for another 15 years before retiring.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. But it doesn't have to be. Your health habits can make a difference. Take the month-long health challenge to *Be Heart Healthy*.

## Ticker Shock and Heart Health

Bypass surgery is almost routine. Doctors do more than 500,000 each year in the U.S. alone. Surgery and medicine help people survive. Still, 610,000 people a year die from heart disease. But heart-healthy habits can stop most heart problems before they start.

## Keep the Beat with Heart-Healthy Habits

The heart beats about 100,000 times a day. It's a muscle that works harder than the legs of a runner sprinting at top speed. It pumps about six quarts of blood through your body every 20 seconds. During an average lifetime, the heart beats more than 2.5 billion times. It's a workhorse. And it's critical to keep it healthy with good food, regular exercise, and preventive care. Here's how:

### Eat more fruits and vegetables

Most adults should eat about 2 cups of fruit a day, and about 2.5 cups of vegetables. These foods are good for your heart. They are low in calories compared to processed foods. And they contain antioxidants, fiber, vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that support heart health.

- ✓ Eat a banana for breakfast.
- ✓ Add berries to yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal.
- ✓ Eat more salads made with leafy greens and other vegetables.
- ✓ Include chopped or shredded vegetables in casseroles, breads, or pasta sauce.
- ✓ Eat more steamed vegetables.
- ✓ Include more beans, peas, and legumes with meals.





## Add more whole grains to your diet

Research shows that eating fiber-rich foods like whole grains can protect your heart. Whole grains help improve cholesterol levels and lower the risk for heart disease. Whole-grain foods can also help you manage your weight and control blood sugar levels.

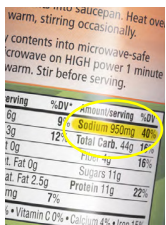
- ✓ Eat more whole-grain breads, pasta, oatmeal, and rice.
- ✓ When baking, replace half of the refined flour called for in the recipe with whole-grain flour.
- ✓ Make sandwiches or toast with whole-grain bread.

## Choose healthy fats

Fats found in fried foods, ice cream, cheese, milk chocolate, red meat, and many processed foods increase your risk for heart problems. On the other hand, healthy fats protect your heart.

- ✓ Use healthy vegetable oils (canola, soy, olive, etc.) for cooking and baking.
- ✓ Eat more olives, avocados, nuts, seeds, and fish that contain healthy fats.

Try these heart-healthy recipes [tinyurl.com/qarqtjt](http://tinyurl.com/qarqtjt)



## Limit sodium (salt)

Most people eat too much sodium, and may not even realize it. Processed foods like pizza, frozen dinners, and fast food are especially high in sodium. Too much can lead to high blood pressure and damage your heart. Aim to eat no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

## Don't smoke

Avoid secondhand smoke. If you smoke, quit! After you stop, your heart

## Check Your Pulse

Your pulse says something about your heart health and overall fitness level. It can even help identify potential health problems.

**Resting heart rate**  
Number of times your heart beats per minute when you're resting.

1. Check your resting heart rate when you first wake up in the morning, or after you've been sitting for a while.
2. Get a watch, clock, or digital device that displays seconds before you start.
3. Feel your pulse. Use your index and middle finger to locate your pulse on the inside of your wrist on the opposite hand.
4. Count the beats for 10 seconds, once you find your pulse.
5. Calculate your resting heart rate by multiplying the result by six.

Write in number of beats counted:

Multiply times 6 **x6**

Equals your heart rate =

Your resting heart rate is good if it's less than:  
**68** beats per minute for men  
**70** beats per minute for women

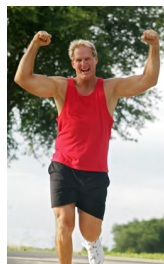
If your resting heart rate is higher than ideal, practice healthy habits to lower your pulse.

begins to grow stronger right away. Within as little as two years, your risk of a heart attack is nearly the same as a non-smoker.

## Get regular exercise

Regular exercise is important for keeping your heart healthy. Aim to get at least 30 minutes of exercise five days a week.

- ✓ Take a 10-minute walk each morning and afternoon.
- ✓ Go to the gym. Try jogging or running. Or take a group exercise class.
- ✓ Yard work and vigorous house cleaning counts as exercise too.



10 steps for better heart health [tinyurl.com/ydyn65w](http://tinyurl.com/ydyn65w)

## Get regular checkups

Visit your doctor at least once a year for a check-up. Preventive care and exams can make a difference. Just ask David Letterman.

**What is YOUR risk of a heart attack in the next 10 years?**

Answer 7 short questions by the National Institutes of Health for a quick estimate.

[tinyurl.com/mrqpkvt](http://tinyurl.com/mrqpkvt)

## Manage stress in healthy ways

Studies show that people with high stress levels at work or home have higher rates of heart disease. Learning to manage stress in healthy ways is good for your heart.

Sources: American Heart Association.; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.; Circulation.; Harvard School of Public Health.; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.; National Institutes of Health.

# Be Heart Healthy



**CHALLENGE**  
 Develop healthy habits to protect your heart

**Instructions**

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you practice healthy habits to protect your heart.
3. Use the calendar to record the actions and choices to make heart-healthy habits a regular part of your life.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you practiced heart-healthy habits. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	
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HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I practiced heart-healthy habits  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity

**Other wellness projects completed this month:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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