

Take Care of Your Heart Month

HEALTHY TIP SHEET - FEBRUARY



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10 Steps for Better Heart Health

- 1 Take a 10-minute walk.** If you don't exercise, a brief walk is a great way to start. If you do exercise, it's a good way to add more activity to your day.
- 2 Give yourself a lift.** Lifting a hardcover book or a two-pound weight a few times a day can help tone your arm muscles. When those become easy, move on to heavier items or join a gym.
- 3 Eat one extra fruit or vegetable a day.** Fruits and vegetables taste delicious and are good for everything from your brain to your bowels.
- 4 Make breakfast count.** Start the day with some fruit and a serving of whole grains, like oatmeal, bran flakes, or whole-wheat toast.
- 5 Stop drinking your calories.** Cutting out just one sugar-sweetened soda or calorie-laden latte can easily save 100 or more calories a day. Over a year, that can translate into a 10-pound weight loss.
- 6 Have a handful of nuts.** Walnuts, almonds, peanuts and other nuts are good for your heart. Try grabbing some instead of chips or cookies when you need a snack.
- 7 Sample the fruits of the sea.** Eat fish or other types of seafood instead of red meat once a week. It's good for the heart, the brain and the waistline.
- 8 Breathe deeply.** Try breathing slowly and deeply for a few minutes a day. It can help you relax. Slow, deep breathing may also help lower blood pressure.
- 9 Wash your hands.** Scrubbing up with soap and water often during the day is a great way to protect your heart and health. The flu, pneumonia and other infections can be very hard on the heart.
- 10 Count your blessings.** Taking a moment each day to acknowledge the blessings in your life is one way to start tapping into other positive emotions. These emotions have been linked to better health, longer life and greater well-being, just as their opposites — chronic anger, worry and hostility — contribute to high blood pressure and heart disease.