

Healthy Living Newsletter

A MedWatch publication to keep you healthy and informed.



Your Circulatory System — Keeping Your Body Going

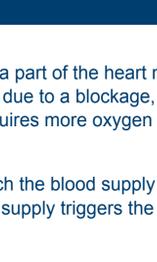
Your Circulatory System and You

Meet the Circulatory System, also known as the cardiovascular system, a vast network of organs and blood vessels that transports oxygen, nutrients and hormones to your body's cells to use for energy, growth and repair. Your circulatory system also removes carbon dioxide and other wastes your cells do not need. Key parts of your circulatory system include:

1. Blood is made up of four components: Red blood cells that carry oxygen, white blood cells that fight infection, platelets which enable our blood to clot, and plasma which carries blood cells, nutrients and waste products.

2. The Heart is the muscle at the center of your circulatory system, pumping blood throughout your body as your heart beats. Your blood sends oxygen and nutrients to all parts of your body and carries away unwanted carbon dioxide and waste products.

3. Blood vessels consist of a vast network of arteries, veins, and capillaries to carry blood pumped by your heart, each playing a very specific role in the circulation process.



Common Diseases of the Circulatory System

Cardiovascular diseases can be severe and potentially life threatening. Understanding conditions that can affect the cardiovascular system may help people seek appropriate and timely medical advice.

- 1. Heart attack.** A heart attack happens when a part of the heart muscle does not receive enough blood. This can occur due to a blockage, a tear in an artery around the heart, or if the heart requires more oxygen than is available.
- 2. Stroke.** A stroke is a medical condition in which the blood supply to a part of the brain becomes cut off. This lack of blood supply triggers the death of brain cells.
- 3. Heart failure.** Heart failure occurs when the heart is unable to pump enough blood to satisfy the body's needs. There is no cure for heart failure, but treatments can help to slow the progression of the disease and alleviate symptoms.
- 4. Arrhythmia.** An arrhythmia is an abnormal heart rhythm. It may present as a heartbeat that is too quick, too slow, or has a distinctive pattern.

Risk Factors for Diseases to the Circulatory System

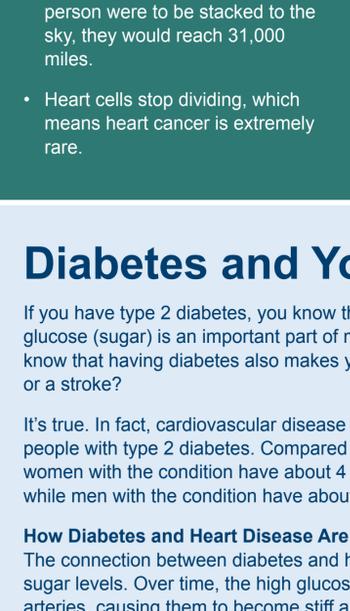
Several health conditions, your lifestyle, your age and family history can increase your risk for heart disease. About half of all Americans (47%) have at least 1 of 3 key risk factors for heart disease: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking. Other risk factors include diabetes, congenital heart defects, family history of heart disease, sleep apnea, obesity, and older age.

The Effects of Aging on the Cardiovascular System

As a person ages, their heart begins to work less effectively than it used to. For example, it cannot beat as fast during physical activity, although the resting heart rate remains steady. Arrhythmias can also develop as the heart ages. Another common condition of aging is more stiffness in the large arteries and stiffness of the heart muscle. This stiffness can cause high blood pressure, increasing the risk of heart attacks, stroke, and heart failure.

(Edited from WebMD)

CIRCULATORY SYSTEM FUN FACTS



The circulatory system doesn't just move blood around the body. It moves nutrients, oxygen, hormones, and electrolytes to exactly where they need to go, from the brain to the feet. Here are a few fascinating facts about the circulatory system.

- If you combine all the arteries, veins and capillaries, they stretch 66,000 miles, more than two and a half times the circumference of the Earth.
- Human blood retains a link to ancient Cambrian seas; the same balance of salts and minerals that existed in the primitive oceans half a billion years ago is present in blood.
- Blood is created in our bones.
- If the red blood cells from one person were to be stacked to the sky, they would reach 31,000 miles.
- Heart cells stop dividing, which means heart cancer is extremely rare.
- Most heart attacks happen on a Monday.
- A single red blood cell will circulate around the body in about 20 seconds.
- Every part of the body receives blood, except the eyes.
- Each red blood cell has 270,000,000 hemoglobin molecules; each hemoglobin molecule can carry four oxygen molecules.
- Laughing is good for your heart. It reduces stress and gives a boost to your immune system.
- A woman's heart beats slightly faster than a man's heart.

Diabetes and Your heart

If you have type 2 diabetes, you know that keeping an eye on your blood glucose (sugar) is an important part of managing the disease. But did you know that having diabetes also makes you more prone to having heart disease or a stroke?

It's true. In fact, cardiovascular disease is the number 1 cause of death among people with type 2 diabetes. Compared with those who don't have diabetes, women with the condition have about 4 times greater risk for heart disease, while men with the condition have about twice the risk.

How Diabetes and Heart Disease Are Related.

The connection between diabetes and heart disease starts with high blood sugar levels. Over time, the high glucose in the bloodstream can damage the arteries, causing them to become stiff and hard. Fatty material that builds up on the inside of these blood vessels can eventually block blood flow to the heart or brain, leading to heart attack or stroke. Your risk of heart disease with diabetes is further elevated if you also have a family history of cardiovascular disease or stroke.

Treatment of Heart Disease.

If you have diabetes and develop heart disease, treatment — first and foremost — will include lifestyle changes such as eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, and quitting smoking. You might also need medication to lower your blood glucose, blood pressure, or cholesterol level, and to treat any heart damage. In some cases, you may need surgery or another medical procedure to treat heart disease.

Protecting Your Heart When You Have Diabetes.

If you believe you are at a higher risk for heart disease, don't despair. There are several small lifestyle changes you can make to not only help prevent heart disease, but also manage your diabetes more effectively.



Get moving. The American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise five days a week. If you don't have time for all 30 minutes at once, break it down into 10-minute segments.



Maintain a healthy weight. Calculating your BMI can help give you an idea of the healthy weight range for you. Talk to your doctor about any weight loss goals.



Monitor your blood sugar closely. Check your blood sugar often and consult with your doctor to make sure you are managing your diabetes effectively.



Keep your cholesterol in a healthy range. Understand what your cholesterol scores mean and how to improve them.



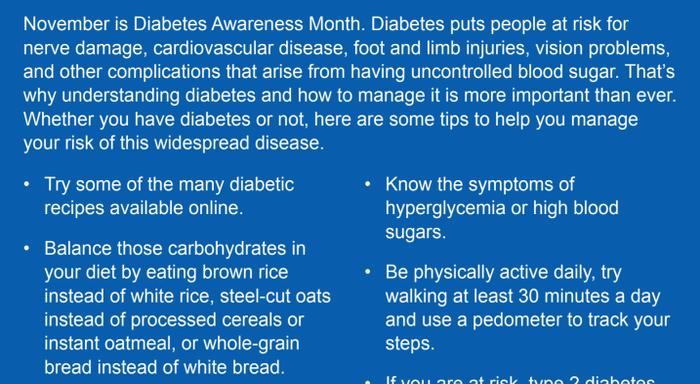
Avoid tobacco products. Smoking greatly increases your risk of developing heart disease. If you smoke, stop.

(Edited from Healthline.com)



Looking for more resources and information to help improve and maintain your health?

Call your Total Lifestyle Coach at (800) 386-5475



Diabetes Awareness Month TIPS

November is Diabetes Awareness Month. Diabetes puts people at risk for nerve damage, cardiovascular disease, foot and limb injuries, vision problems, and other complications that arise from having uncontrolled blood sugar. That's why understanding diabetes and how to manage it is more important than ever. Whether you have diabetes or not, here are some tips to help you manage your risk of this widespread disease.

- Try some of the many diabetic recipes available online.
- Balance those carbohydrate in your diet by eating brown rice instead of white rice, steel-cut oats instead of processed cereals or instant oatmeal, or whole-grain bread instead of white bread.
- Don't skip breakfast. Start your day off with a good breakfast. Eating breakfast every day will help you have energy as well as steady blood sugar levels.
- Eat healthy fats: instead of snacking on cheese, chips or crackers, enjoy a handful of unsalted nuts or seeds. Go for variety with sunflower, pumpkin seeds, almonds, cashews, pecans, and walnuts.
- Reduce simple sugar consumption and make healthy substitutions. Substitute sparkling water for soda, a bowl of frozen fruit instead of ice cream, one slice of your favorite cheese instead of cake, or a piece of fruit instead of pie.
- Know the symptoms of hyperglycemia or high blood sugars.
- Be physically active daily, try walking at least 30 minutes a day and use a pedometer to track your steps.
- If you are at risk, type 2 diabetes can be prevented with moderate weight loss (10-15 pounds) and 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, for example, brisk walking each day.
- Talk to your doctor about the hemoglobin A1C goal that is best for you. A1C tells you the average level of glucose or sugar in your blood over 2-3 months. An A1C level of 7% or less is the goal for many people with diabetes.

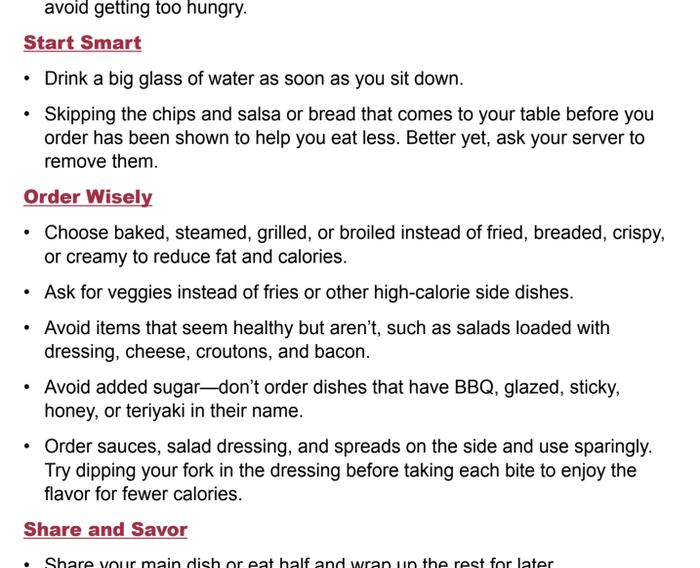
(Edited from the American Diabetes Association)

Nutrition Corner



EATING OUT - The Healthy Way

Three in five Americans say they eat dinner at least once a week, and as you've probably noticed, restaurant portions have gotten a lot bigger. Unless you have a plan in place, that can be a recipe for regular overeating. While you can't directly control the way the food is prepared or the calories in each dish, you can plan ahead, ask questions, and order food that both tastes good and is good for you. Here are some tips:



Plan Ahead

- Decide what you're going to order before you go so you don't feel rushed or tempted by less healthy choices.
- If your meal will be later than normal, have a snack that contains fiber and protein—a small handful of nuts is a great choice—before you go out to avoid getting too hungry.

Start Smart

- Drink a big glass of water as soon as you sit down.
- Skipping the chips and salsa or bread that comes to your table before you order has been shown to help you eat less. Better yet, ask your server to remove them.

Order Wisely

- Choose baked, steamed, grilled, or broiled instead of fried, breaded, crispy, or creamy to reduce fat and calories.
- Ask for veggies instead of fries or other high-calorie side dishes.
- Avoid items that seem healthy but aren't, such as salads loaded with dressing, cheese, croutons, and bacon.
- Avoid added sugar—don't order dishes that have BBQ, glazed, sticky, honey, or teriyaki in their name.
- Order sauces, salad dressing, and spreads on the side and use sparingly. Try dipping your fork in the dressing before taking each bite to enjoy the flavor for fewer calories.

Share and Savor

- Share your main dish or eat half and wrap up the rest for later.
- Enjoy the occasional sweet treat (minus the guilt) by cutting back on carbs during your meal and get a dessert to share with the table. You won't miss out—the first few bites are usually the tastiest.

(Edited from CDC.gov)

Your Total Lifestyle Coach (TLC) is your personal 'health advocate'.

For more information, additional tools, and resources to help you improve and maintain your health, call (800) 386-5475.