

**The annual number of heart attacks could take your  
breath away.  
So could just one heart attack.**

Cardiovascular Disease is the #1 killer of women in the United States. February has been designated as American Heart Health month. Here are some important and helpful tips for you to incorporate for a healthier lifestyle. Because CARING FOR YOUR HEART is worth the effort.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL**

Don't stress it: Stress effects heart health and the progression of heart disease in ways that vary for each individual. We know that stress often causes women to smoke, decrease physical activity and eat unhealthy foods.

Tip : Try yoga, or meditation and social activities, as they have been found to significantly relieve stress.

Tip : A can do attitude will help you get over the inevitable hurdles of weight loss. Anticipate "slip ups - they happen. Instead of letting them derail your weight loss efforts, learn from them and get right back on track. You don't have to be perfect to lose weight and be healthy. Just keep your eye on the target and keep moving forward, one step at a time. And give yourself an **A** for attitude.

### **DIET**

*YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT (REMEMBER THAT) AND EVERY DISEASE PROCESS STARTS IN THE GUT.*

Diets don't work. There are hundreds of diets that will help you lose weight, but what good is losing weight if you gain it right back? Eating crazy food combinations or eliminating food groups is not the way to keep weight off. Instead, choose a nutritionally balanced plan with enough calories to keep you from feeling famished.

Tip : Eat regular meals. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Don't leave home without eating something nutritious to

get your metabolism perking and give you energy for the day ahead. Breakfast can be something as simple as a banana, low fat yogurt, cereal or last night's leftovers - a small meal that contains both fiber and protein can keep you feeling satisfied until lunchtime.

Tip : Fiber is nature's weight loss aid, it comes in two forms, soluble (the gummy type found in oatmeal and beans) and insoluble (the type found in fruits and vegetables, and whole grains). Both are important to good health. Soluble fibers help to lower cholesterol: insoluble contains indigestible fibers that add bulk to our diets. Both forms swell in the stomach and help to create a feeling of fullness. Most high-fiber foods are also high in water and low in calories, making them a "must -have" diet foods. The daily recommended amount of fiber is 25 - 30 grams.

Tip : Despite your best efforts, it can be hard to get all the fiber and nutrients you need every day. Supplement your healthy eating plan with a fiber supplement and taking a multivitamin will help fill in the gaps.

Tip : Water is your body's preferred form of fluid. It is thirst-quenching and naturally delicious without one single calorie. You need 6 - 8 glasses of water or fluids each day. Many find that drinking water helps keep them from feeling fatigue and overeating.

## **EXERCISE**

The key in this tip is to get moving. If exercise was a medication it would be the most widely prescribed medication because it prevents so many different types of disease processes. This is the pathway to weight control along with a healthy diet to reduce the chance of developing a heart condition.

Tip: Just do it! Get into a routine that includes regular physical activity. Not only does exercise energize you, it burns calories, it improves balance and coordination, and relieves stress. When you don't have time for a formal workout (45 - 60 minutes), try squeezing in at least three 10 -minute chunks of physical activity. (Be sure to check with your health care provider before starting any exercise routine.)

Physical activity does make a difference: Women in one study who were inactive and obese had three and one half times the risk of developing coronary heart disease. Preventing and controlling hypertension is one of the key contributing factors for heart disease.

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet which is high in fruits and vegetables and low in sodium, has been shown to be effective in reducing blood pressure. Frozen and canned foods are often high in sodium so freshly prepared foods offer a real advantage. Go to [www.girlfriendshealth.com](http://www.girlfriendshealth.com) for more information on the Dash Diet and the Healthy Heart diet.

Tip : Excuses should be excised. Do you really want to lose weight and improve your health once and for all? Then stop making excuses and just do it! Sure, that's easier said than done. But you need to stop finding reasons why you can't start moving a healthier lifestyle and you're not getting any younger. So, start by listing all the reasons why you should. Don't put it off for tomorrow. Start today, by doing something positive - just one small thing - toward your health and weight loss.

Tip : If you're really fond of your sofa and exercise sounds like work then psych yourself up with a more thoughtful approach aimed at moving your body, rather than "exercising".

**MAKE 2007 THE YEAR YOU TAKE YOUR HEALTH TO HEART.**