



Strategic Benefit Solutions Incorporated



A
Healthy
Piece...

...wellness newsletter providing you with a monthly educational article to help you live well and be healthy. *One piece at a time.*

“Cardiovascular disease (CVD)—including heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure—is the #1 killer of women and men in the United States. It is a leading cause of disability, preventing Americans from working and enjoying family activities. CVD costs the United States over \$300 billion each year, including the cost of health care services, medications and lost productivity.”

February Is American Heart Month: Be ♥ Healthy!

During the month of February, Americans see the human heart as the symbol of love. February is American Heart Month, a time to show yourself the love – stay “heart healthy” for yourself and your loved ones.

Consider the strategies below for better heart health. You'll be surprised how many of them can become lifelong habits!



Work with your health care team. Get a checkup at least once each year, even if you feel healthy. A health care professional can check for conditions that put you at risk for CVD.

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.

Get your cholesterol checked. Your health care team should test your cholesterol levels at least once every five years. Talk with your health care professional about this simple blood test.

Eat a healthy diet. Choosing healthy meal and snack options can help you avoid CVD and its complications. Limiting sodium in your diet can lower your blood pressure. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables—adults should have at least five servings each day. Eating foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol and high in fiber.

Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese can increase your risk for CVD. To determine whether your weight is in a healthy range, health care professionals often calculate a number called body mass index (BMI). Doctors sometimes also use waist and hip measurements to measure a person's body fat.

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 activity for at least 150 minutes per week. Incorporate exercise into your day in different ways. Exercising with friends and family can be a great way to stay healthy and have fun.

Don't smoke. Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for CVD. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quit as soon as possible. Your health care team can suggest ways to help you quit.

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; women to no more than one.

Manage your diabetes. If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels closely, and talk with your health care team about treatment options.

Take your medicine. If you're taking medication to treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or another condition, follow the instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don't understand something. If you have side effects, talk with your health care team about your options.

You can prevent and manage heart disease, one step at a time.

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