

KEEPING A HEALTHY HEART

The heart is an essential organ responsible for circulating blood throughout the body. The blood carries and distributes oxygen and nutrients to every part of the body and the heart ensures its constant flow through the heart and arteries. The heart is like an engine, so you need to keep it in optimal condition to guarantee peak performance of the body. Keeping a healthy heart doesn't require some farfetched routine or any extraordinary measures. There are several simple actions you can incorporate into your daily lifestyle to make it happen. Let's look at some of them.

Study God's word

God's Word is life and health to your body. Colossians 3:16 says to let the Word of Christ completely fill you in all its richness. You have to imbibe the Word through study and meditation. Meditate on God's Word every day. Don't wait for trouble to strike or for symptoms to show up first. The more you do, the more knowledge and revelation you will have concerning God's provision for your health. Stay in the Word and you'll always be healthy and sound. The Bible says, "...as you unwrap my (God's) words, they will impart true life and radiant health into the very core of your being" (Proverbs 4:22 TPT).

Eat healthy.

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fiber-rich foods make a great first step to a heart-healthy diet. These foods contain vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that protect your heart in numerous ways. Additionally, limit your intake of highly processed food, refined sugar, high-sodium or salty meals and snacks, and saturated fats.

Get active.

Exercise is great for your heart. Whether moderate aerobic anaerobic exercise, the aim is to get you moving. You can start slowly. Just walking briskly for ten minutes daily will help. Break up long stretches of inactivity and/or sedentary work with brief walks on errands, household chores, and a quick run up and down the stairs. Consider including activities like dancing, swimming, or cycling in your weekly exercise routine for bigger benefits.

Maintain a healthy body weight.

Being overweight, particularly around the middle of the body, can put extra strain on one's heart, increasing the risk of heart disease. This additional weight can cause conditions like high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and type 2 diabetes. Aim to maintain a healthy weight, through a balanced diet and regular exercise.

Get quality sleep

A good night's rest is essential for your heart and the whole body. During sleep, your body gets a chance to reset and restore itself. Your brain removes waste products, your muscles relax and recover from daily stress, and you wake up feeling rejuvenated and prepared to start a new day. Establish healthy sleep hygiene (i.e. environment and habits related to sleep) to ensure you get the right amount and quality of sleep.

Avoid stress.

Stress management starts with your mind. You have entered into God's rest, so refuse to worry or be anxious. Finding solutions to every challenge is easier if you stay calm. Take some time daily for relaxation. You could listen to good music, meditate, visit or chat with loved ones, or even get a massage. All these can go a long way to elevate your mood and keep stress in check for your heart's sake.

Avoid tobacco and alcohol.

Smoking is a major risk factor for heart and lung diseases. If you smoke, you should quit. If you don't, stay away from people when they do; secondhand smoke is very harmful to the heart, lungs, and blood vessels. Excessive alcohol consumption damages the liver's ability to remove toxins

from the blood and impedes metabolism, and these will affect the heart and other organs in the body over time.

Do regular health checks.

Routine heart check-ups and health screening are crucial as they help with the early detection of medical conditions and/or risk factors. You can conduct regular self-checks with simple gadgets and wearable fitness trackers that track blood pressure and heart rate, blood sugar levels, etc. It is recommended that you visit your primary physician at least once a year for a thorough health screening.

