

**FEBRUARY IS HEART HEALTH MONTH**  
Remember Heart Health = Brain Health

CDC Foundation's

**LIVE to the BEAT**

# Quit Smoking!



- No matter how long you've been smoking, it's never too late to quit
- Pick a date in the next 2 weeks and mark it on your calendar
- You can plan to quit all at once or slowly reduce how much you smoke until you **stop completely on your quit date**
- **Make it official.** Tell friends and family when you plan to quit so they can support you
- Or share that you're quitting smoking on social media to hold yourself accountable.
- Find free resources to help you quit:
  - Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) to get [expert phone counseling support](#).
  - Check out the [LiveHelp chat service](#) to talk online with a trained counselor.
  - Text QUITNOW (English) or DÉJELO YA (Spanish) to 333888 for [text message support](#) to help you stay motivated.
  - Use the [quitSTART smartphone app](#) to track your progress and get helpful tips.
  - Join a [Smokefree social media community](#) to share your experiences and connect with other people who are trying to quit.

# Move More

Physical activity can also **improve your life right now**. Being active can:

- Brighten your mood
- Lower your blood pressure
- Help you sleep better
- Help you feel more energetic
- Lower stress!



You don't need a gym membership or a personal trainer. Try these tips:

- **Follow along with online workout or yoga videos**
- **Walk, jog, or roll around your block or at the local community track or mall**
- **Put on some music and dance around the house**

**How much time do I need for activity?**

- 2 hours and 30 minutes of physical activity a week — that's a little more than **20 minutes a day**.
- But even a few minutes is good for you. The teensiest bit of activity is better than nothing.

# Eat Healthy



**Healthy eating** is key to a healthy heart — but it's not always easy. The good news is it **isn't all or nothing**.

- start with small changes that work for you

## **Let food labels work for you**

Skip right to the good stuff: the Nutrition Facts label. Compare different brands to find options with:

**•Cut Back on Sodium:** The #1 source of sodium (salt) is... bread.

**•Choose Less Saturated Fat**

**•Choose Less added Sugar**

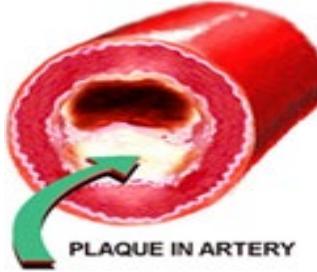
**•Choose More Fiber !!**

- Drink water, sparkling water, or unsweetened tea instead of soda
- Make sure to get a fruit and vegetable on your plate — and aim for different colors.
- Look for items that are grilled or baked, instead of fried. And try to avoid rich sauces.
- Split a more filling entrée or dessert with a friend — or take half home as leftovers.
- At fast food chains, skip the super sizing.
  - Ask for extra lettuce, tomato, or other vegetable toppings.

# Control Blood Pressure

- **Get your blood pressure checked**, and do your best to track of your numbers — you can even get your own blood pressure cuff to check it at home
- **Cut back on sodium (salt)** to help control your blood pressure — try cooking more at home and learning what to watch out for when choosing packaged foods
- **Get active** to help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range — even 5 minutes a day can make a real difference to your health
- If a doctor has prescribed medicine to help control your high blood pressure, **follow all instructions** for taking them

# Manage Cholesterol



- There are 2 types of cholesterol:
  - **“Good” cholesterol** is called HDL cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein)
  - **“Bad” cholesterol** is called LDL cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein)
- **Pro tip:** To keep HDL and LDL straight, remember the H in HDL stands for “Healthy” and you want it “Higher” — the L in LDL stands for “Lousy” and you want it “Lower”
- Foods like fatty meats and full-fat dairy products aren’t great for your heart because they have cholesterol **and** a lot of saturated fat
- On the other hand, foods like eggs and shrimp are healthy to eat in moderation even though they have cholesterol because they’re low in saturated fat
- **Get your cholesterol checked**
- **Eat healthy** for your heart — cut back on saturated fat and choose foods with lots of fiber
- **Lower your bad LDL cholesterol today by:**
  - Cooking with canola or olive oil instead of butter
  - Eating fiber-rich fruits and vegetables, like apples or broccoli
- **Raise your good HDL cholesterol today by:**
  - Having a high-fiber breakfast, like oatmeal
  - Swapping a salty snack for unsalted nuts
- **Get active** to help keep your cholesterol in a healthy range — just 10 minutes a day can make a difference!
- If a health care professional has prescribed medicine to manage your cholesterol, make sure to carefully **follow all instructions** for taking it

# Manage Blood Sugar

- High blood sugar can weaken your blood vessels and damage the nerves that control your heart.
- **Diabetes** also raises your risk for high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- Having diabetes nearly **doubles** your risk for heart disease.
- Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes cause high blood sugar:
  - In **type 1** diabetes, your body doesn't make any insulin.
  - In **type 2** diabetes, your body doesn't use insulin the way it should
- **Try the plate method** to create tasty meals with a healthy balance of vegetables, proteins, and carbs — no weighing, counting, or measuring required!
  - **Fill half your plate with non-starchy veggies** like broccoli, squash, or carrots
  - **Fill a quarter with lean proteins** like chicken, fish, or beans
  - **Fill a quarter with carbs** — including whole grains like brown rice, starchy veggies like potatoes, or fruits like apple slices
- **Drink water** or another unsweetened drink like sparkling water or tea with no sugar
- **Make time for breakfast.** Skipping breakfast may cause blood sugar spikes later in the day, after lunch and dinner.
- **Stay hydrated.** Less water in your body means your blood sugar gets more concentrated.
- **Be careful with caffeine.** Some people have blood sugar spikes after drinking coffee or other caffeinated drinks. If caffeine affects your blood sugar, try to cut back.

# Work with a Doctor or HCP

## **Make sure your doctor is a good fit**

If you don't click with a doctor, you can always switch. If you ever feel uncomfortable or like your doctor isn't giving you the support you need, **don't hesitate to make a change**

Medical visits can be quick — and it may be hard to take in all the information. But remember, this is your time to get a handle on your health! **Don't hesitate to ask all the questions you need.**



**Be proactive.** If something's bothering you, don't wait for the doctor to ask

**Be Prepared.** Write down or record your questions

**Bring up concerns** right away — like if you have a new symptom or you're not sure a medicine is working for you

# Stress Less



Take a few deep breaths. **Mindful, deep breathing** can trigger your body's relaxation response — and you can do it anywhere. Try it right now:

Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose

Keep breathing in until your belly puffs out

Breathe out slowly through your mouth

Repeat until you've calmed down

- Take screen and news breaks
- Practice meditation and breathing exercises
- Follow along with a meditation book, video, or podcast
- Practice deep breathing while listening to relaxing music
- Do soothing activities, like gardening or knitting
- Try something creative, like painting or journaling

# Live to the Beat!



- Information adapted from:
  - \*CDC
  - \*[www.livetothethebeat.org/heart-healthy-topics](http://www.livetothethebeat.org/heart-healthy-topics)
- \*All pictures for education purposes only