



4 HEART-HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS

With February being American Heart Month, we can raise awareness about heart disease and how we can prevent it – both at home and in the community. Heart disease is currently the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States, and while some conditions and defects are hereditary, there are quite a few conditions that can be prevented and even treated with the aid of healthy lifestyle choices. Here are some examples of how we can make more heart-healthy choices:

METABOLISM MATTERS

What is metabolic syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome may be diagnosed when a patient has a cluster of risk factors for cardiovascular disease and diabetes, which leads to an increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

One of the best treatments for Metabolic Syndrome is a sustainable exercise program—for example, 30 minutes a day 5 days a week. A VO2 Max test can define the intensity levels that will yield the most benefits while decreasing fatigue and injury. Exercise has a beneficial effect on blood pressure, cholesterol, levels, and insulin sensitivity, regardless of whether or not you lose weight.

1. **Maintain a Healthy Weight** – Being overweight increases your risk of heart disease. A BMI of less than 25 and a waist circumference of 35 inches or less is recommended for preventing and treating heart disease. Weight extremes can also increase your risk for heart disease.
2. **Move More**- Exercise helps you achieve and maintain a healthy weight and control diabetes, elevated cholesterol and high blood pressure – all risk factors for heart disease. With your doctor's OK, make physical activity part of your everyday routine, shooting for a goal of at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week.
3. **Quit Smoking** – Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease, causing plaque buildup and hardened arteries, both of which make your heart work harder. Quitting is the best way to reduce your risk of heart disease and its complications.
4. **Eat Healthy Foods** –Certain foods contribute to a healthy heart. Look for fruits and vegetables that are dark in color, with a variety of color being best. (Consider berries, carrots, sweet potatoes, red peppers, spinach and broccoli). Fish high in omega-3's, such as salmon, tuna, herring and trout benefit your heart, as do nuts, flaxseed and oatmeal. Looking to reward yourself? Indulge in moderate amounts of dark chocolate and red wine!