



Nutrition News - February 2024

Seven Habits That Protect Your Heart

February is American Heart Month, but keeping your heart in the best possible condition is a year-round job. A recent University of South Carolina study shows that lifestyle changes really do impact your risk of heart disease. Participants followed three or four of the "Simple Seven" heart-health criteria over an 11-year period. Researchers compared adherence to these lifestyle goals with risk of death from cardiovascular disease. There were 11,993 participants in the study, with an average age of 46 at the start. Researchers observed a 55% lower risk of cardiovascular mortality in those who adhered to at least three of the criteria.

For those who met five to seven of the criteria, the risk was 63% lower than those meeting the fewest. Long story short: The more healthy lifestyle habits you adopt, the more benefit you will see. Which habits you adopt first may be based on which risks are the highest for you. For example, if you already have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, work with your physician to address these risks first. If high body weight is a factor contributing to your overall health, both eating better and exercising can help you lower that BMI over time. They can also help improve cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure management.

More details are available in the Tufts University Health and Nutrition Newsletter at tuftshealthletter.com.

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(Clip and save!)

"The Simple Seven"

- 1) at least 30 minutes of daily moderate physical activity, like brisk walking, five times per week
- 2) Control cholesterol
- 3) Eat better
- 4) Manage blood pressure
- 5) Achieve a recommended body mass index (BMI); BMI over 30 indicates obesity
- 6) Reduce blood sugar
- 7) Stop smoking

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Heart Disease in Women

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), one in four women in the United States dies of heart disease. Eighty percent of women ages 40-60 already have one or more risk factors for heart disease. Research also shows (see Page 1) the more risk factors you have, the greater your chances of developing heart disease. Research compiled by the NHLBI suggests having just one risk factor doubles your chance of developing heart disease.

Women of any age need to take action to reduce their risks. According to the NHLBI website, among US women:

- age 18 and older, 17 percent are current smokers;
- age 20 and older, 64 percent are overweight, 27 percent have hypertension, and 45 percent have high cholesterol.

African American and Hispanic women, in particular, have higher rates of some risk factors for heart disease and are disproportionately affected by the disease compared to white women. More than 80 percent of midlife African American women are overweight or obese, 53 percent have hypertension, and 11 percent have been diagnosed with diabetes. Eighty percent of Hispanic women ages 20 and older are overweight or obese, and 15 percent have been diagnosed with diabetes.

Have a heart-healthy tomorrow by starting today: Adopt the “Simple Seven” habits on page 1 to protect your heart, and the eating tips on this page, and visit nhlbi.nih.gov for more information.

For more information about older-adult nutrition from the Office for the Aging, visit

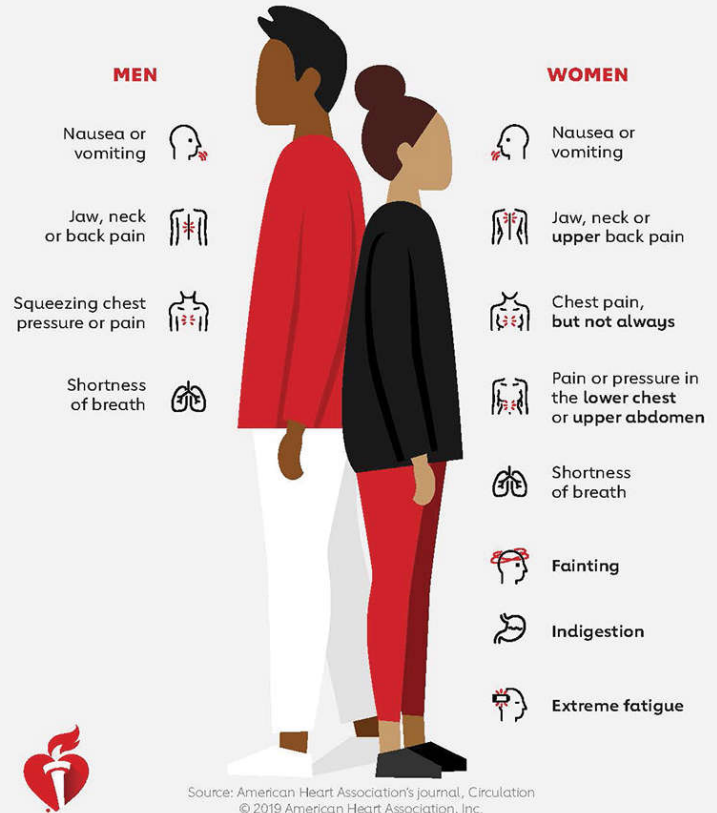
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You'll learn about our eight Friendship Centers, the Home Delivered Meals Program, nutrition education and counseling, and much more!

HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS: MEN VS. WOMEN

By American Heart Association News

The most common symptom of a heart attack for both men and women is chest pain. But women may experience less obvious warning signs.



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