



Choose Heart-Healthy Habits

CHALLENGE

Improve diet & exercise for heart health

Are you at risk for heart problems? Answer these questions to find out

- | | Y | N | |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is your blood pressure 120/80 or higher? |
| 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you eat red meat? |
| 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is getting regular exercise hard for you? |
| 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a family history of heart disease? |
| 5. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are you overweight or obese? |
| 6. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you smoke or have exposure to secondhand smoke? |

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, you could be at risk for heart-related problems. Routine check-ups to measure blood pressure, blood fats and weight can help you know what habit changes will improve heart health. Diet, exercise and healthy-lifestyle habits can make a big difference.²

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read this health challenge resource.
2. Create a plan to be more active and eat more heart-healthy foods.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When Kevin Smith worked at a New Jersey convenience store, eating candy bars, hot dogs, soda and junk food was kind of part of the gig. But that day job also gave him an idea. Make a movie

called *Clerks*. He wrote the script and actually filmed the movie at the store he worked at after hours. And it launched his career as a screenwriter, actor, film producer and director.

He started gaining success...and gaining weight. After tipping the scale at 330 pounds, Smith had a massive heart attack at age 48. And he knew things had to change.

He started eating more fruits and vegetables. Walking the dog became a daily routine. And in six months he lost 50-plus pounds and adopted a lifestyle to lose 50 more.

“I’m on a different path now,” says Smith. “I had to make a switch after my heart attack. Because what’s the alternative, death? It took a minute, but my overall health is better. I sleep better, move better, think better, and I’m healthier.”

How’s your heart health? Did you know heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S.¹ It doesn’t have to be. Your health habits can make a difference. Take the month-long health challenge to **Choose Heart-Healthy Habits**.

8 Habits to Boost Heart Health

If you want to improve your heart health, do something about it. About 80 percent of heart-related problems are preventable with diet, exercise and smart lifestyle habits.³ Here are some things you can do:

1. Eat more fruits and vegetables

Here’s what you should be eating: 1-1/2 to 2 cups of fruit per day and 2 to 3 cups of vegetables per day. The truth is only 12 percent of adults eat enough fruit and vegetables⁴ even though they’re low in calories and contain antioxidants, fiber, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Smith made a big change to his diet after having a heart attack.

- ✓ Eat a banana for breakfast.
- ✓ Add berries to yogurt, cereal or oatmeal.
- ✓ Eat more salads made with leafy greens and other vegetables.
- ✓ Include chopped or shredded vegetables in casseroles, breads or pasta sauce.
- ✓ Eat more steamed vegetables.
- ✓ Include more beans, peas and legumes with meals.

Video:
How to prevent a heart attack
<https://youtu.be/vMr1CagwSHc>

8 Habits to Boost Heart Health (Continuation)

2. Add more whole grains to your diet

Research shows that eating fiber-rich foods like whole grains can protect your heart.⁵ Whole grains help improve cholesterol levels and lower the risk for heart disease. Whole grain foods can also help you manage your weight and control blood sugar levels.



- ✓ Eat more whole grain breads, pasta, oatmeal and rice.
- ✓ When baking, replace half of the refined flour called for in the recipe with whole grain flour.
- ✓ Make sandwiches or toast with whole grain bread.

3. Choose healthy fats

Fats found in fried foods, ice cream, cheese, milk chocolate, red meat and many processed foods increase your risk for heart problems. On the other hand, healthy fats protect your heart.



- ✓ Use healthy vegetable oils (canola, soy, olive, etc.) for cooking and baking.
- ✓ Eat more olives, avocados, nuts and seeds.
- ✓ Add fish to your diet one to two times a week.

4. Limit sodium (salt)

Most people eat too much sodium and may not even realize it. Processed foods like pizza, frozen

Steps to improve heart health
<http://tinyurl.com/vdvn65w>

dinners and fast food are especially high in sodium. Too much can lead to high blood pressure and damage your heart. Aim to eat no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

5. Don't smoke

And avoid secondhand smoke. If you smoke, quit! After you stop, your heart begins to grow stronger right away. Within as little as two years, your risk of a heart attack is nearly the same as a non-smoker.

6. Get regular exercise

Regular exercise is important for keeping your heart healthy. Aim to get at least 30 minutes of exercise five days a week.⁶ Make time strength training two days a week.



- ✓ Take a 10-minute walk each morning and afternoon.
- ✓ Go to the gym. Try jogging or running. Or take a group exercise class.
- ✓ Yard work and vigorous house cleaning counts as exercise too.

7. Manage stress in healthy ways

Studies show that people with high stress levels at work or home have higher rates of heart disease. Learning to manage stress in healthy ways is good for your heart.⁷

- ✓ Limit your stress load. Don't over commit. Learn to say "No" and "I need more help."

Are you at risk for heart disease?
<https://tinyurl.com/s2s7skd>

- ✓ Get adequate rest daily.
- ✓ Make time to exercise, relax and do fun things.
- ✓ Don't use alcohol or other addictive substances to manage stress.
- ✓ Develop a good support system. Talking with family members, friends, or co-workers about stress in your life can help.

8. Get regular checkups

Visit your doctor at least once a year for a check-up. Preventive care and exams can make a difference.

Want to keep your heart healthy for years to come? Now is always the best time to start.

Ticker-Data About Heart Health



Ready to learn a little more about your heart to keep it healthy? Check out this ticker data:

100,000

Average number of times heart beats per day

6

Number of quarts of blood the heart pumps through the body every 20 seconds

2.5 billion

Average number of beats the heart makes in a lifetime

30%

Average reduction in heart disease risk from eating more plant-based foods, less red meat and more olive oil

500,000

Average number of heart bypass surgeries doctors perform every year

647,457

Number of people who die from heart disease each year

References

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Choose Heart-Healthy Habits



CHALLENGE

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Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you make heart-healthy choices.
3. Use the calendar to record the actions and choices you make to help eating more heart-healthy foods become a regular part of your life.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you made heart-healthy choices. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I made heart-healthy choices
 _____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____