

[IMAGE]

## How To Prevent Heart Disease

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Heart disease is a problem that few people can say they have no concerns about. Most people either know someone with heart disease or they themselves have heart disease. So, what's the best way to protect ourselves from this problem?

All of my patients know how important I think diet is to our overall health...and there is heart health is one of those factors that are significantly impacted by our diet. There are really a few factors to focus on for your heart to continue to beat in a healthy hearty fashion. Let's start with the basics:

1. Get quality sleep and rest/relaxation
2. Make sure to eat healthy fats and vegetables
3. Keep your body moving daily...yes daily
4. Boost your mood, keep yourself smiling
5. Avoid processed foods

Even though these seem like very basic things that everyone knows about, I find that most people are not making a conscious effort to ensure these factors are met every day. Many times when we get busy, some of these fall to the wayside and that's not ok if you want to keep your heart healthy.

Sleep is the time when our body heals and repairs itself. So, if you shortchange yourself in the area of sleep and relaxation, your overworked and overstressed body will rebel in the form of many health issues. Your heart is not immune to you overstressing your body so make sure to make time to rest and relax.

Your diet is the foundation of your health. So if you eat healthy fats like those found in nuts, fish, avocados and olive oil, just to name a few options, you'll be helping your body run less inflamed and more efficiently. Also, eating vegetables in all colors of the rainbow will help you filled up on vitamins, minerals and antioxidants to help your heart run at its best.

heart disease - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Daily exercise doesn't mean that you have to put on your workout clothes and go to a gym every day. It just means that you should keep your body moving

daily. Even when you are busy working, you can walk to your colleague's desk to ask questions instead of just shooting off an email. You can also take the stairs at work instead of taking the elevator. Parking farther away in the parking lot so you can walk farther can help get in your daily steps as well...and if you have a lunch time to chat with co-workers, why not take it outside for a noon time walk. It'll get you energized for your afternoon as well as keeping your heart ticking along healthily.

Many people aren't aware that depression and mood issues can affect your heart health as well, but it can. So, if you are having mood issues, talk to your doctor and get help. Allowing it to fester and wear your mind and body down is not the way to go. Social support is something that has been seen to be helpful for mood issues so maybe spending time with your loved ones or checking into seeing a therapist might help. If you are an animal person, some studies suggest that pets help with moods. So, whether it's a furry four-legged buddy or your best buddy from childhood, spend more time with loved ones to help keep your mood up so as to keep your heart healthy as well.

Finally, processed foods are the bane of our existence since it seems to erode our health in a multitude of different ways. Our heart is not immune either. So, next time you see a commercial for junk food, just say NO. I always tell patients to only stock their cupboards and fridge with healthy options so that if you are tempted, you only have healthy options in the house to choose from so as to cut down on your weak moment poor food choices. The chemicals and dyes and sugars in processed foods cause inflammation in your body and typically are high in fats and sugars, neither of which is good for your heart. So, try to remember that in regards to foods, your health depends on eating the right things and also NOT eating the wrong things.

If you pay attention to these fundamental principles, hopefully, your health will be better in more than just one organ system. Just remember that you should always check in at least once a year with your doctor for your yearly physical to make sure your entire body, including your heart, are functioning at its optimum.

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clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit [www.makinghealthyez.com](http://www.makinghealthyez.com).

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