

[IMAGE]

## Take Charge of Your Heart

By Editorial Staff

Your heart health, that is. Heart health is always important, of course, but perhaps no more so than now, since a steep increase in cardiovascular problems is projected. Let's take a look at the bad news – the disturbing projections – and then the good: what you can do to take charge of your heart health starting today.

The American College of Cardiology projects a shocking rise in the four primary cardiovascular risk factors from 2025-2060: type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and obesity. Diabetes tops the list, with a projected 39.3 percent increase; followed by high cholesterol (27.6 percent increase) and high BP (25.1 percent increase). Obesity is projected to increase the least, although still a troubling 18.3 percent; perhaps due to the fact that so many people are already considered overweight or obese.

The ACC projections, which appear in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, also reveal the cardiovascular consequences of these risk factor increases, and they're just as troubling: a 33.8 percent increase in stroke cases, a 33.4 percent increase in heart failure, 30.7 percent increase in ischemic heart disease cases and 16.9 percent increase in heart attacks.

Take Charge of Your Heart - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark So, that's the bad, and it's really bad; now let's talk about the good, which is how you and millions of others can turn these projections on their heads by improving your heart health. The formula is relatively simple: 1) Eat more heart-healthy foods, including vegetables, whole grains and sources of healthy fats (salmon, avocado, nuts and seeds). 2) Limit foods high in saturated fat (red meat, cheese, butter, etc.) and added sugars (most processed foods and particularly sweets). 3) Exercise regularly; this includes aerobic activity and resistance training. 4) Quit smoking if you're a current smoker (this includes vaping). Talk to your doctor about these and other ways to maximize your cardiovascular health before you become a statistic.

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