

HEART HEALTH

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Heart disease is the leading cause of death in America. You can help prevent and control many risk factors for heart disease with lifestyle modifications and medications. A few risk factors such as age, gender and family history cannot be controlled. Healthy food choices and an active lifestyle can have an impact on the health of your heart. Here are some ways you can help prevent and control your risk for heart disease.

Healthy food choices

Eat a variety of nutrient dense foods options such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, lean proteins and fatty fish. Aim to make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Legumes such as beans and lentils are not only very affordable but also great sources of protein and fiber. Incorporate fish two to three times per week. Choose whole grains more often and reduce the amount of refined grains in your diet.

Eat foods with less added salt, sugar and fat. Reduce your salt intake by preparing foods at home instead of eating out frequently. You have better control of how much sodium is in your meals this way as restaurant foods can be high in sodium and fat. Avoid using the salt shaker. When shopping select reduced sodium, low sodium or no salt added canned goods and products.

Low to moderate amounts of unsaturated fat can actually be good for your heart. Foods such as nuts, olives, avocados and fatty fish can help increase good cholesterol levels. Limit the amount of saturated fat in your diet which comes from high-fat cuts of meat, butter, and full-fat dairy products. Trans fat or partially hydrogenated oil should be avoided if possible.

Get moving

Being physically active helps to lower blood pressure, manage stress and control weight. Find the type of movement that brings you joy and keeps you coming back for more. For adults the recommendation is 150 minutes per week of physical activity including strength and conditioning exercises. Remember to meet yourself where you are with physical activity first. Any type of movement is better than none. Start with 10 minutes at a time and gradually increase as able. Reach out to your medical provider if you are uncertain if a particular exercise routine is safe for you.

Control your stress levels

Stress can contribute to poor health behaviors linked to increased risk for heart disease. Managing your stress is a powerful way to take control of your health and well-being. Find your outlets to help better manage your stress.

Don't smoke

Smoking increases your risk for heart disease. If you currently smoke, there are resources to help you quit.

In closing, your heart keeps you alive and well, so let's work to treat it kindly! Try out this delicious heart healthy recipe.



Mediterranean Salmon Grain Bowl

Ingredients for the Marinade:

½ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons lemon zest, grated
The juice of 1 lemon
2 teaspoons dried oregano
2 teaspoons dried dill
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon honey
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper

Ingredients:

4 (5 ounce) salmon fillets, thawed
½ cup quinoa, rinsed
1 cup water or broth

Optional Topping Ingredients:

4 cups romaine or mixed greens
1 cup cucumber, thinly sliced in half moons
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
½ cup red onion, thinly sliced in half moons
1 can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
½ cup pitted kalamata olives, halved
½ cup feta cheese, crumbled
1 avocado, sliced or diced

Directions:

1. Combine the marinade ingredients in a small bowl. Pour half of the marinade over the salmon fillets. Marinate the salmon in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Reserve the other half of the marinade for drizzling.

2. Combine the quinoa and water or broth in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then decrease the heat to maintain a gentle simmer. Cook until the quinoa has absorbed all of the water, around 15 to 20 minutes. Reduce heat as time goes on to maintain a gentle simmer. Remove from the heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Then fluff with a fork.
3. When the marinating time is up, discard the marinade, and place the salmon on a foil lined baking sheet. Bake in a 400° F oven for 10 to 12 minutes until the salmon reaches an internal temperature of 145° F is reached.
4. To serve family style, place quinoa or greens in the bottoms of large bowls. Top each with a salmon fillet, and then customize your bowls with your preference of toppings and drizzle with the reserved marinade.

