



Health Edition

## Love Your Heart

**Did you know that more than 80 MILLION Americans have some form of heart disease?**

While this statistic seems daunting and you can't change your family health history, you can try these simple lifestyle strategies to prove your enduring love to your one and only... heart.



### Ditch the Diets

Severely restricting food, yo-yo dieting and/or fasting can be extremely harmful to all of your organs, especially your heart. Instead, concentrate on the delicious and heart-healthy foods you can eat often: naturally sweet fruits, roasted vegetables, toasty whole-grains, flavorful olive oil, fresh fish and creamy low-fat dairy; and in moderation try dark chocolate, red wine and nuts.

### Know Your Heart "Numbers"

Besides your current blood pressure and cholesterol levels, here's another lab value to get: your C-reactive protein (CPR) level. CPR is an indicator for artery inflammation and can be obtained by an inexpensive blood test when checking your cholesterol numbers, ask your healthcare provider at your next check-up.

### Spread the Love

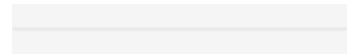
Research shows that giving hugs and expressing affection can reduce your stress levels, which in turn, can lower blood pressure. Consider this an easy, inexpensive and drug-free way of warding off heart complications!

### Treat Your Teeth Nice

Gum disease can increase your risk for heart disease as oral bacteria can enter the blood stream and add to plaque build-up in the arteries. So, be sure to take extra good care of those pearly whites by brushing twice a day and flossing at least once a day.

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### Turn Towards the Positive

A recent study in *Circulation* tracked 90,000+ healthy women's optimism levels and rates of heart attacks over a course of eight years. The optimists were found to have lower risk for heart disease as opposed to those who tended to be more hostile and cynical. The likely conclusion is the better you like yourself and life, the more apt you are to participate in healthier lifestyle choices. So, put on those rose-color glasses and upgrade your outlook - your heart will thank you.

## Featured Tool: Cardiac Risk Calculator

Your first step in heart attack prevention is to assess your risk factors. The 10-year Cardiac Risk calculator, powered by WorldDoc, can help estimate your risk of having a heart attack in the next 10 years.

To get started:

- [Login](#) to your personal health management account; powered by WorldDoc
- From the home page, click the Health Helpers icon
- Click the Calculators tab and scroll down to the 10-year Cardiac Risk calculator
- Calculate your risk and find out if you are heart healthy

While you are logged in, be sure to visit the Medical Library to find articles on heart disease, blood pressure, and cholesterol to help you better understand and improve your health.

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