

Heart Healthy Tips

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Tips for Lowering Your Cholesterol

Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death and disability in the United States. Each year, heart disease kills more Americans than cancer. A heart-healthy lifestyle can significantly reduce your cholesterol levels, in some cases in place of medication. Dr. Andrew Freeman, MD, offers a few tips to help you in your efforts to go heart-healthy:

Go vegetarian. You don't have to give up meat permanently, but cutting animal products (red meat, chicken, milk, cheese, etc.) out of your diet one or two days per week can be a big help in lowering your cholesterol.

Plan your medication. Taking your cholesterol medication at night can have an impact on how well it's working. The enzymes in your liver that make cholesterol are most active at night, so taking your medication before bed may increase its effectiveness.

Increase exercise intensity. A casual walk may not get the heart rate up enough to make a difference. You should work out hard enough that you sweat and are tired afterwards. If you're a little sore the next day, that's a good thing. A good trick is to put a slight incline on the treadmill to help increase intensity.

Know the numbers. Your total cholesterol number does not tell the whole story. Understand where your HDL and LDL levels are. Remember LDL numbers is the bad cholesterol and is associated with heart attacks. HDL measures the amount of good cholesterol you have. If you are confused by your cholesterol numbers, ask your physician to explain it further.

Chest pain doesn't always occur in the chest. With women chest pain can actually occur in a number of places. Women can experience pain in the arm, back and even teeth that is actually associated with the heart. If you are experiencing abnormal pain, contact your physician.

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