



# TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEART

*The American Heart Association gives 7 simple rules to live better and to take care of your heart.*

- \* **Avoid smoking and using tobacco products.** Tobacco products harm your blood cells and cause damage to your heart. Using tobacco puts you and your loved ones at higher risk for heart disease.
- \* **Get Active.** Kids should be active for at least 60 minutes a day. Be a role model for your children and be active with them at least 30 minutes per day.
- \* **Eat a heart-healthy diet.** When you eat a heart-healthy diet, you improve your chances for feeling good and staying healthy for life! Include colorful fruits and vegetables in every meal.
- \* **Keep a healthy weight.** When you shed extra fat and unnecessary pounds, you reduce the burden on your heart, lungs, blood vessels and skeleton. You give yourself the gift of active living, you lower your blood pressure and you help yourself feel better, too.
- \* **Manage Blood Pressure.** High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. When your blood pressure stays within healthy ranges, you reduce the strain on your heart, arteries, and kidneys.
- \* **Control Cholesterol.** High cholesterol contributes to plaque, which can clog arteries and lead to heart disease and stroke.
- \* **Watch your blood sugar.** Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose (or blood sugar) that our bodies use for energy. Over time, high levels of blood sugar can damage your heart, kidneys, eyes and nerves.



Source: American Heart Association

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# SUGAR & YOUR HEART

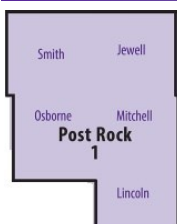
There is naturally occurring sugar and added sugar in food we eat. Naturally occurring sugar is found in fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose). *Added sugar* is added during processing and packaging, or at the table. Many people consume more added sugar than they realize. Added sugars give our bodies no beneficial nutrients but contain added calories which can reduce our heart health.

The American Heart Association recommends women eat no more than 24 grams of added sugar a day and men eat less than 36 grams of added sugar a day. Children should not eat more than 25 grams of added sugar, which is equal to 6 teaspoons a day. Follow these tips to reduce the amount of sugar in your diet.



- \* **Toss the table sugar**, syrup, honey and molasses. Cut back on the amount of sugar added to things you eat or drink regularly like cereal, pancakes, coffee or tea.
- \* **Swap out the soda.** Buy sugar-free or low-calorie beverages. Water is always the best choice!
- \* **Eat fresh, frozen, dried or canned fruit.** Choose fruit canned in water or natural juice. Avoid fruit canned in syrup, especially heavy syrup. Drain and rinse in a colander to remove excess syrup or juice.
- \* **Compare food labels and choose products with the lowest amounts of added sugars.** Look for sugar on the ingredient list.
- \* **Add fruit.** Instead of adding sugar to cereal or oatmeal, try fresh fruit or dried fruit (raisins, cranberries or apricots).
- \* **Cut the serving back.** When baking cookies, brownies or cakes, cut the sugar called for in your recipe by one-third to one-half. Often you won't notice the difference.

Source: American Heart Association



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