



Heart Healthy *Living Toolkit*



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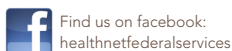
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This toolkit contains resources to help you achieve success in living a heart healthy life.

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Coronary Artery Disease Action Plan

This **action plan** is a guide to help you manage the signs and symptoms of coronary artery disease. You and your provider should complete this plan together at your next visit. The three colors (zones), green, yellow and red, help you decide what to do.

Zone	Status	Symptoms	Actions
GREEN	<p>Green means you are doing well. Symptoms are STABLE. Your coronary artery disease is controlled.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeling good overall breathing without difficulty tolerating activity weight stable, no swelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue regular routine. Take medications as directed. Follow a balanced diet. Exercise regularly.
YELLOW	<p>Yellow means CAUTION. Your symptoms indicate you may need to talk with your provider.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decreased energy level or feeling very tired more frequent or more uncomfortable episodes of chest pressure, even if relieved by medication sudden weight gain of three pounds in one day or five pounds in one week other symptoms of concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rest, monitor how you feel. Take your prescribed medications as directed by your provider. Call your provider.
RED	<p>Red means you may need help IMMEDIATELY! Symptoms are unstable. You need to be evaluated now if your yellow zone actions have not helped your symptoms improve.</p>	<p>You may have a feeling of pain, pressure, heaviness, or tightness in your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chest neck jaw arms back shoulders <p>You may also feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> nauseous dizzy/lightheaded short of breath a cold sweat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STOP activity and rest. If you are not alone, tell someone how you feel. DOSE – take angina medicine as prescribed by your provider. If symptoms don't go away within five minutes, call 911 and ask for an ambulance. If you can't access 911, have someone drive you to the hospital.

Improve *Your* Heart Health

You can help maintain a healthy heart by following these tips below.

Eat right. Make healthy eating part of your daily routine. Select whole grains, lean meats, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products for a well-balanced diet. A nutritious diet:

- Improves cholesterol.
- Improves blood sugar.
- Reduces inflammation.
- Maintains a healthy weight.
- Nourishes your body and mind.

Exercise. Get 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week to help reduce stress and keep your body healthy and strong. Select activities to fit in your schedule. Check with your provider before beginning any new exercise program.

Regular physical activity:

- Improves cardiac fitness.
- Improves cholesterol.
- Improves blood sugar.
- Reduces stress/improves mood.
- Maintains a healthy weight.
- Improves circulation.

Maintain a healthy weight. Being excessively over or under a healthy weight can have severe effects on your health. If you are overweight, losing 5–10 percent of your weight can make a significant difference. Talk with your provider to determine your ideal weight range. Maintaining a healthy weight:

- Improves blood pressure.
- Improves cholesterol.
- Improves blood sugar.
- Increases energy.

Important Information

Current medications:

Medication allergies:

Pharmacy phone number:

Provider's information:

Recognizing a Heart Attack



A heart attack occurs when the flow of blood to the heart is blocked. While heart attacks can be fatal, every year tens of thousands of Americans survive heart attacks and go on to enjoy a normal life. Learning the warning signs of a heart attack and getting prompt medical care can increase your chance of survival.

Warning Signs of a Heart Attack

Heart attack symptoms can vary from person to person. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health (NHLBI), reports the following as the most common warning signs of a heart attack:

- chest pain or discomfort in the center or left side of the chest lasting more than a few minutes
- pressure, squeezing or fullness in the chest that goes away and comes back
- discomfort in other areas of the upper body, including one or both arms, the back, neck, shoulders, jaw, or the upper part of the stomach
- shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- breaking out in a cold sweat, bouts of nausea or light-headedness



Maintain a healthy weight to help prevent a heart attack.

Act Quickly

If you feel you are experiencing symptoms of a heart attack, get help quickly. Even if you aren't sure, it's best to be evaluated by a doctor. Waiting too long to get help can increase the damage to your heart and reduce

your chance of survival. Don't wait longer than five minutes to call 911. Never try to drive yourself to a hospital as this can put you and others at risk.

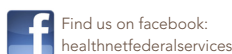
Prevention and Treatment

It may not be surprising to learn the lifestyle changes that help people recover after having a heart attack can also prevent future heart attacks. NHLBI recommends:

- not smoking
- controlling high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes
- being physically active
- eating healthy
- maintaining a healthy weight
- reducing and managing stress

Having a heart attack is a life-threatening emergency. When you know the warning signs and what to do when a heart attack is happening, you can increase your chance of surviving. If you have had a heart attack, make the necessary lifestyle changes to help prevent another one from occurring.

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Understanding Heart Disease



Heart disease, such as coronary heart disease, heart attack, congestive heart failure, and congestive heart disease, is the leading cause of death for both men and women according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The good news is that even modest changes to your diet and lifestyle can improve your heart health and lower your risk.

Signs and Symptoms of Heart Disease

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health (NHLBI), lists the following as signs or symptoms of heart disease. See your doctor right away if you experience any of the following:

- sharp chest pain or discomfort in center or left side of chest
- chest discomfort feeling like pressure, squeezing, fullness, indigestion, or heartburn
- chest pain or discomfort that doesn't go away
- upper body discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or upper part of the stomach
- shortness of breath, occurring with or before chest discomfort
- nausea or vomiting
- light-headedness or fainting
- breaking out in a cold sweat
- sleep problems
- fatigue, or lack of energy



Aim for a healthy weight. If you are overweight or obese, you are more likely to develop heart disease.

Preventing Heart Disease

Do not smoke – Smoking can raise your risk for heart disease and heart attack, and worsen other heart disease risk factors.

Aim for a healthy weight – The more you weigh and the more body fat you have, the more likely you are to develop coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, breathing problems, and certain cancers.

Get moving – Regular physical activity can lower bad LDL cholesterol levels and your risk for type 2 diabetes, increase good HDL cholesterol levels, control high blood pressure, and help you lose excess weight.

Eat for your heart – A heart-healthy diet includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, lean meats, nuts and seeds, and limits sodium, saturated and trans fats, sugar, and alcohol.

Manage stress – Stress can contribute to high blood pressure or trigger a heart attack. Learn how to manage stress and cope with problems by exercising, practicing meditation, participating in a stress management program, talking with family, friends, community or religious support groups, or by visiting a mental healthcare provider.

Making lifestyle changes can help prevent or treat heart disease. Talk with your doctor about your risk and what you can do to lower it.



Stress – *It's Under Your Control*

Stress is a part of life that everyone experiences at one time or another. There are a variety of ways to help manage your response to stress and relieve the effects of stress. What works for one person may not work for another. Try different activities to help you keep your response to stress in check, and try different relaxation methods to reduce the impact of stress. Then choose what works best for you.

Which of the following activities will you use to reduce stress and manage your response?

- Set priorities and learn to say no to less important activities and interruptions.
- Think about quality over quantity. No one is perfect, so limit how much you do and focus on the quality of what you do.
- Focus on and complete one task at a time. When projects seem overwhelming, find ways to break them down into smaller tasks.
- Schedule and plan your time on a calendar and use a checklist to track your progress.
- Live a healthy lifestyle. Eat nutritious food, get enough sleep, exercise, and balance work and play.
- Exercise daily. Whether you choose vigorous, moderate or recreational exercise, it has a variety of health benefits, including reducing stress.
- Use a journal to gain awareness, transfer thoughts and frustrations, problem-solve, identify your strengths or your triggers and patterns for stress, and to shift to a positive attitude.
- Be kind to yourself and others. Start by being realistic with your expectations. Be thankful and express your gratitude. Journaling your thankfulness helps you focus on the positive aspects of your life.
- Let go. Learn to be flexible and let go of the little stuff. Reduce stress and resolve conflict by compromising, weighing pros and cons, and exploring alternatives for the issues that are most important to you.

Find ways to relax and renew your energy. Check off the methods below you will try.

Stimulate your senses

- Work with your hands – do a puzzle, try pottery, draw or sketch, or play computer games
- Express emotions or feelings; laugh, cry, hug, touch
- Watch a movie, play or comedy show
- Look through old pictures or photo albums
- Listen to music, go to a concert, sing or move to music
- Enjoy the smell, sight and touch of nature
- Spend time with your pet

Do something physical

- Take a long walk
- Dance to your favorite music or video
- Lift weights, bicycle, swim
- Go fishing or golfing
- Try tai chi, yoga or Pilates
- Try a new sport or activity

Be social

- Share your feelings with someone you trust
- Call an old friend or make a new one
- Attend support meetings
- Attend sporting, cultural or other social events
- Join a book club, hiking or volunteer group



Take up a hobby or new interest

- Woodworking
 - Sewing or needlepoint
 - Learn a new language
 - Painting, crafts, photography, or other artwork
 - Gardening
 - Learn to play an instrument
 - Other: What is something new you've wanted to try?
-

Rest

- Take a nap
- Read a good book
- Watch a good movie
- Take a shower or hot bath
- Balance work and play (leisure)
- Get a massage, a pedicure or a facial

Relax and refresh your mind

- Meditate
- Pray
- Read
- Use visualization or just daydream

Do something different

- Change your routine
- Change your pace
- Change your scenery
- Connect with or help someone
- Eat by candlelight or have a picnic



Tips for Stress Management

Identify Stress Triggers

List the situations that cause worry, stress and tension, and note how the stress affects you, your relationships and your job. It will be easier to relieve your stress when you know what is causing it.

Learn to Say No

If you are feeling overwhelmed, simplify your life by eliminating activities that are unnecessary or stressful. Stop taking on more than you can or should handle.

Balance Work and Play

Spend quality time with your family, play games or do something creative.

Keep Things in Perspective

Avoid overreacting to minor issues that are out of your control. Do not sweat the small stuff.

Think Positively

Look for the positive in every situation and surround yourself with others who do as well.

Stay Active

Try to get 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. Exercise helps reduce stress and improves the health of your body and mind.

Make Time for Yourself

Meditate, listen to music, get a massage, or engage in activities you enjoy such as reading, gardening or sports.

Laugh Often

Laughter can be contagious and is a natural stress reliever. Find ways to add humor and laughter to your life so you can help others around you laugh more often too.

Breathe

Take several slow, deep breaths before you begin to deal with a stressful situation. This will calm you down and give you time to think about the best way to respond to the situation.

Get Enough Sleep

Try to get plenty of sleep each night. Being well rested can help you deal with stress more effectively.

Get Organized and Prioritize

Keep a calendar and list your tasks and activities for each day. This can eliminate the feeling of being overwhelmed and help avoid forgetting something important. Rate each task in order of importance or urgency.

Ask for Help

Communicate with friends, family or a health professional to let them know your thoughts and feelings. Let others provide love, support and guidance.



Simplify your life by eliminating activities that are unnecessary or stressful.

Communicating with Your Doctor



Making the most out of the time you spend with your doctor, whether you are sick or well, is important. Good communication helps your doctor understand your health concerns, which can lead to a quick and proper diagnosis. Knowing what specific information to give your doctor and what questions to ask allows you to be an active and informed participant in your health care.

What to Tell Your Doctor

Most doctors have a limited amount of time to spend with each patient, often 15 minutes or less. Being prepared for your appointment ensures you make the best use of this time. Be ready to:

- Describe your health concerns and symptoms.
- Explain when your symptoms began, how often you experience them and anything that relieves them.
- Give a complete health history.
- Tell your doctor about any prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or herbal products you are taking.
- Discuss any allergies you have.
- Let your doctor know of any lifestyle changes you have recently made.
- Tell your doctor about any personal issues you may be experiencing.

If your current health concern seems like something you have experienced before, tell your doctor what treatment you received and how effective it was in relieving the symptoms.

What to Ask Your Doctor

Once your doctor makes a diagnosis, it's important to ask questions to completely understand the information given to you. The following are basic questions to ask, which will encourage dialogue with your doctor:

- What is the diagnosis?
- What does this diagnosis mean?
- What are the treatment options?
- What are the benefits and/or risks of each treatment option?
- Is a follow-up appointment needed?
- If medication is prescribed, what will the medication do and what are the side effects?
- If a test or procedure is ordered, what can be expected?

You may also want to take notes or ask for additional written information to take home and read at your leisure. Ask for clarification if you don't understand any information given to you. Don't be afraid to seek a second opinion if you feel uncertain about the information or diagnosis you received.



Being prepared for your appointment ensures you make the best use of your doctor's time.

Writing SMART Goals

Most people start with an outcome goal. An example of an outcome goal is: *“The overall goal I want to reach is to live healthier and lose two inches around my waist.”*

To reach an outcome, you must have behavior goals. For example: *“I want to walk five days a week for 30-60 minutes a day.”*

The chart below shows a brainstorming process to break this behavior goal down into a weekly SMART behavior goal. This is an example of what the final weekly SMART goal might be: *“This week I will walk 15 minutes a day at a brisk pace for three days.”*

Breaking down the steps to writing a **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goal.**

Goal Component	Example
<p>SPECIFIC What, when, where, and how will the behavior be done?</p>	<p><i>I want to walk regularly (at least five days a week) in the morning to help me reduce inches around my waist.</i></p>
<p>MEASURABLE How much, how many, and/or how often will you do the behavior?</p>	<p><i>I want to walk 30-60 minutes a day at a brisk pace five days a week.</i></p>
<p>ATTAINABLE What are your steps to meet or reach your goal? Set your goal low enough to be reached, but high enough to be a challenge.</p>	<p><i>I will start walking 15 minutes a day for three days a week and work up to 30 minutes a day for five days a week. Seven days might be too high (no room for unexpected events or illness). One day is too low and not enough to help me lose inches.</i></p>
<p>RELEVANT Is it the right behavior goal to help you meet your overall outcome? Is it a good time in your life to be setting this goal?</p>	<p><i>Now that my children are back in school and the holidays are over I can start walking in the morning.</i></p>
<p>TIME-BOUND Make sure your goal includes a specific time frame in which you will achieve it.</p>	<p><i>I will increase my time each week by five minutes until I reach 30 minutes a day. I will add an extra day every two to four weeks until I reach 30-60 minutes for five days a week.</i></p>

Now it's your turn. Write and track your own SMART goal.