A healthy heart is the key to a longer and a happier life!

Did you know?

A Healthy Heart is a **Risk-Free Heart**, the risk of developing **heart disease**. Key is to minimize the activities or habits that may lead to a disease which may harm your heart.

What Is a heart disease?

When people talk about heart disease, they're most commonly talking about coronary heart disease (CHD) or coronary artery disease (CAD). This is the most common type of heart disease.

When someone has CHD, the coronary arteries (tubes) that take blood to the heart are narrow or blocked. This happens when cholesterol and fatty material, called **plaque**, build up inside the arteries.

When plaque blocks an artery, it's hard for blood to flow to the heart. A blocked artery can cause chest pain or **a heart attack**.
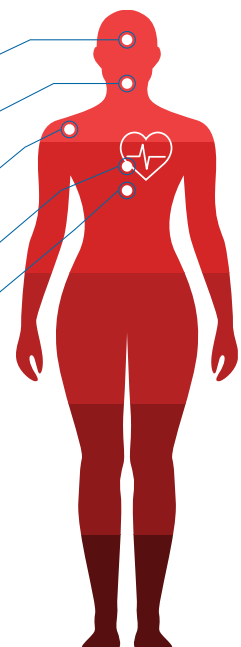
Common Heart Attack Warning Signs

Lightheadedness, nausea or vomiting

Jaw, neck or back pain

Discomfort or pain in arm or shoulder

Pain or discomfort in chest

Shortness of breath

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Who is at risk of heart disease?

Anyone can get heart disease there are risk factors that can and there are which cannot be controlled.

One is at risk if:

- Have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes
- Smoking
- Overweight or have obesity
- Low physical activity
- A blood relative had heart disease
- Men Age > 45 Years
- Women Age > 55 years

RISK FACTORS THAT CAN BE MANAGED	RISK FACTORS YOU CAN'T CONTROL
• Smoking • High blood cholesterol • High blood pressure • Inactivity • Obesity • Diabetes	• Hereditary (Family health history) • Gender • Ethnicity • Age • Previous stroke or heart attack

Basic Indicators of a Healthy Heart

There are various factors that are used to gauge the health of your heart. Below are the most common that can be used as basic indicators:

- **HEART RATE:** For most adults, a normal resting heart rate ranges between 60 and 100 beats per minute.

- **BLOOD PRESSURE:** For a healthy heart, blood pressure is usually below 120/80 mm Hg. If your systolic pressure is above 130/90, then it's considered elevated.

- **CHOLESTEROL:** Your body needs cholesterol to build healthy cells, but only at healthy levels. High levels of certain cholesterol can be caused genetically and/or is a result of an unhealthy lifestyle (such as consuming too much saturated fat which can increase blood cholesterol levels and "bad" LDL cholesterol levels).

  - **Good Fats:** Fats in olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, and fish are considered "Good fats" lower the risk of heart disease. These food types should be made part of routine meals.

  - **Bad Fats:** are saturated fats present in high fat meats and dairy products, like dark chicken meat and poultry skin, fatty cuts of beef, pork, and lamb, and high fat dairy products (including whole milk, sour cream, butter, cheese, sour cream, and ice cream). These fats should be avoided in routine meals.

- **SMOKING:** Smoking is a major cause of cardiovascular disease (CVD)/heart disease and causes approximately one of every four deaths from CVD. Smoking enhances the process of plaque development which eventually leads to heart disease. Motivate yourself and find ways to quit smoking earlier the better.

- **OBESITY:** is defined as the increase in size and amount of fat cells in the body. Overweight and obesity are caused by many factors including behaviors like eating patterns, lack of sleep or physical activity. Obesity is a chronic health condition that raises the risk for heart disease.

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- **BREATHING:** If you can perform moderately intense physical activities, such as brisk walking, running, or lifting weights without experiencing chest pain, tightness in the chest or shortness of breath, your cardiovascular system is supplying your body with the oxygen levels it needs indicating that you have a healthy heart.

- **RECOVERY RATE:** Heart rate recovery is a measure of the change in your heart rate after you have stopped a workout or another high-intensity activity. Heart rate recovery has proved a reliable tool in confirming cardiovascular health especially in individuals at risk of heart disease (such as those with high blood pressure and diabetes). Ideally, the faster your heart rate decreases after exercise, the better your cardiovascular health – and vice versa.

- **ENERGY LEVELS:** One of the easiest ways to tell if you have a healthy heart is how high your energy levels are throughout the day. If you feel fatigued with light activities (like walking a few blocks, shopping, carrying groceries, or walking up the stairs) your heart is struggling to pump enough blood to serve all your body's needs.

DAY TO DAY HEALTHY HEART TIPS

Stop smoking

Pump some iron

Keep a healthy blood pressure

Reduce stress

Drink less alcohol

Cut the fat, eat healthy

Monitor your blood lipids (cholesterol & triglycerides), blood glucose, and BMI

Maintain a physical activity routine

Lose weight

Sources:

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "High Cholesterol Facts"
- American Heart Association, "How to get your cholesterol tested?"
- Johns Hopkins Medicine, "Heart & Vascular Institute"
- Mayo Clinic, Heart Diseases

Please do send us your feedback at well-being@metlife.ae. It will help us improve this newsletter if we hear that our content has made a difference in your wellbeing. We are keen to listen to you and to improve for you.

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