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## Health Tips: Heart Health

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### Your Heart:

Your heart is a strong muscle about the size of the palm of your hand. Just like an engine makes a car go, the heart keeps your body running. The heart pumps oxygen-rich blood through your body.

### Heart Disease:

There are many different kinds of heart disease. Plaque buildup is often to blame. But there are other causes too. For example, choices you might make every day can lead to damage to artery walls.

### Problems:

- Do you smoke?
- Do you drink a lot of alcohol?
- Are you overweight?
- Do you spend the day sitting at a desk or in front of the television?
- Do you avoid doing exercise?
- Do you have diabetes or high blood pressure that is not under control?
- Are you under a lot of stress?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, making changes might help you prevent or delay heart disease.

One sign that you are at risk for heart disease is your waist measurement. Extra fat around the middle of your body increases risk. A good way to check that is simply to measure your waist. A man's risk of heart disease is increased if his waist measures more than 40 inches. A woman's risk is increased at 35 inches.

## Signs of Heart Disease:

Early heart disease often doesn't have symptoms; that's why **regular checkups with a healthcare provider are important.**

**Everyone should know the warning signs of heart disease:**

- Pain in the chest, shoulders, arms, neck, jaw, or back can be a symptom of heart disease.
- Weakness or numbness on one side of the face or body
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Tiredness
- Swelling in the ankles, feet, legs, stomach and/or neck
- Fluttering in the chest, or the feeling you are skipping a heart beat or beating too hard

**Talk to your doctor if you have any of these signs. Chest pain should be taken seriously.**

## What Can I Do To Prevent Heart Disease?

Try to be more physically active.

If you smoke, quit.

Follow a heart healthy diet.

Keep a healthy weight.

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For More Information: American Heart Association [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)