

Stayin' Alive After 45

Why is it important to think about heart disease?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death. Preserving the heart muscle leads to a longer life.

Who is at risk?

Those individuals who have the following “risk factors”:

- Family history of heart disease
- Smoking
- Hypertension/High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes
- Cholesterol
- History of vascular disease

What changes can you make to your lifestyle?

I advise the following lifestyle changes/habits:

- Eat 7-10 colors/day
- Avoid prepackaged and processed food (things wrapped in cellophane)
- Don't add salt
- Exercise 45 min. 5-6 days/week
- Achieve “your” ideal weight. Use an old trick: Add zero to your goal and limit yourself to that many calories per day (Example: Eat 1300 calories to weigh 130)
- Dieting is not as important as transitioning to healthy eating habits
- Eat breakfast every day
- Get at least 7 hours of sleep
- Laugh daily and have companionship
- Have sexual relations at least 2 times per week
- 1-2 alcoholic drinks/day for men and 4-5 drinks/week for women may be helpful

How can your doctor help?

It is ideal for your doctor to work with you as a partner to help modify some of your “risk factors”. Controlling your blood pressure with a systolic BP (top number) less than 130; controlling your diabetes, treating your cholesterol to meet target numbers, and working with your doctor to come up with the best medication regimen for your body and temperament.

Other Suggestions?

Medicine is changing rapidly. Regular check-ups are essential to staying up to date. Seek immediate evaluation if you notice changes in your body, symptoms, or ability to perform activities. Early intervention is the best prevention. The goal is to preserve the heart muscle as a pump so you can live a happy, productive life.

