



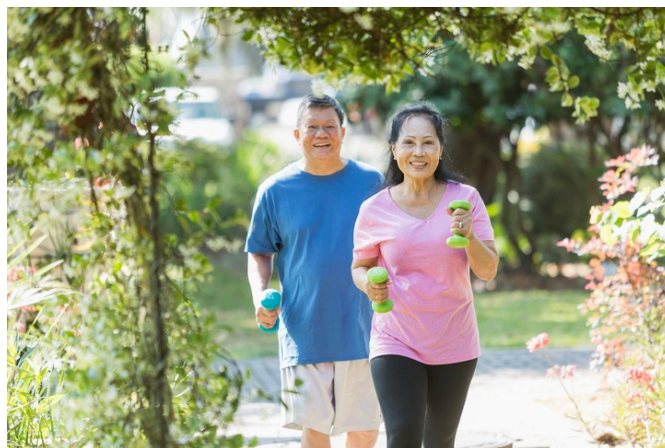
February 2017

Lifestyle changes do matter

Your dad died of a heart attack at age 53. His father had died at age 50 of heart disease. What are the odds that you will suffer the same fate? Are your genes your destiny?

A new analysis of data from more than 55,600 people concludes that the answer is "no." DNA is not destiny when it comes to heart disease. Not smoking, moderate exercise and eating a diet rich in vegetables, fruits and whole grains can greatly lessen your risk, even with a family history of the disease.

Researchers at the Center for Human Genetic Research at Massachusetts General Hospital found that genes can double the risk of heart disease, but healthy lifestyle choices can cut that risk in half. They also found that terrible lifestyle choices wipe out about half the benefits of lucky genes. The study results were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* online edition on November 15, 2016.



Walking is the simplest positive change you can make to improve your heart health.

– American Heart Association

QuickTakes



Make your home heart healthy

February is American Heart Month and a good time to look at ways to boost your and your family's heart health at home. With some simple tweaks to your environment, you'll make it easier to practice healthy habits. Start by stocking the kitchen with heart-healthy foods.

- Make room in the fridge for lots of fruits and veggies.
- Stock up on low-sodium tomato sauce, salsa, soup, beans and whole-grain crackers.

The family room is for relaxing together. But sitting too long can harm your blood vessels, says the American Heart Association. (Remember, adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week.)

- Clear space to dance, hula-hoop, jump rope or work out with an exercise video.
- Keep small free weights handy to do arm curls while watching TV.

Sleep, along with diet and exercise, is a cornerstone of health. Shoot for 7 to 9 hours per night. Two tips for better sleep:

- Turn off the TV and other electronic devices well before going to sleep.
- Turn the thermostat down a couple of degrees before bedtime.

When it comes to preventing heart disease and stroke, lifestyle choices really do matter. Read on to learn how living right can counter the effects of genes and heart disease.

Small, everyday choices for heart health in the workplace

It's relatively easy to make healthy choices in your home environment where you're the boss. It's harder to make those same choices at work where time, space and healthy food options are often limited.

Physical activity options for the workplace

It can be a struggle to get moving during the workday, especially if you have a desk job, but it's important to try.

- Get off the bus one stop early and walk to work.
- Schedule time to walk briskly around the block.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Stand and stretch at least once every hour.
- Keep a pair of walking shoes at your workplace.

8 Great heart-healthy snacks to eat at your desk

Whole grains, fresh fruits, tasty veggies and other heart-healthy fare can be hard to find in and around the office. With a little creativity and a fridge in the break room, you can change that. Try:

1. **Hummus with whole-wheat pita chips.** This delicious and filling chickpea spread comes in roasted pepper, garlic/herb, and even honey/mustard varieties, too.
2. **Greek yogurt dip (tzatziki) and veggie sticks.** Look for prepared tzatziki near the hummus in the deli case.
3. **Baked tortilla chips and salsa.** Fresh salsa is lower in sodium than most bottled brands.
4. **Almonds or walnuts.** Full of heart-healthy fats and calories, too. A small handful daily is all you need to lower your risk.
5. **Apple slices and nut butter.** Make your daily apple even healthier with a smear of natural peanut or almond butter.
6. **Turkey jerky.** Low in fat and rich in chewy goodness with only 30 calories per 1-ounce piece.
7. **Air-popped popcorn.** Put 1/4 cup of popcorn kernels in a microwave-safe bowl. Cover with a microwave-safe plate and microwave for 2 minutes 45 seconds on high.
8. **Roasted chickpeas.** Make a double batch of the recipe below to share with coworkers.

Roasted Chickpeas Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 can (15.5 oz) low-sodium chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained
 2 teaspoons olive oil
 1/2 teaspoon sugar
 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
 Aleppo or cayenne pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Blot chickpeas with paper towels to dry them. Toss in a bowl with olive oil, garlic salt and Aleppo or cayenne pepper. Spread on the prepared baking sheet.
3. Bake in the oven for 25 to 30 minutes, shaking the pan from time to time, until the chickpeas are crunchy and brown.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

83 Calories
 1 g Fat
 3 g Protein
 11 g Carbohydrate
 3 g Fiber
 150 mg Sodium

Source: Healthy Living Kitchens