

# Make Your Home Heart Healthy

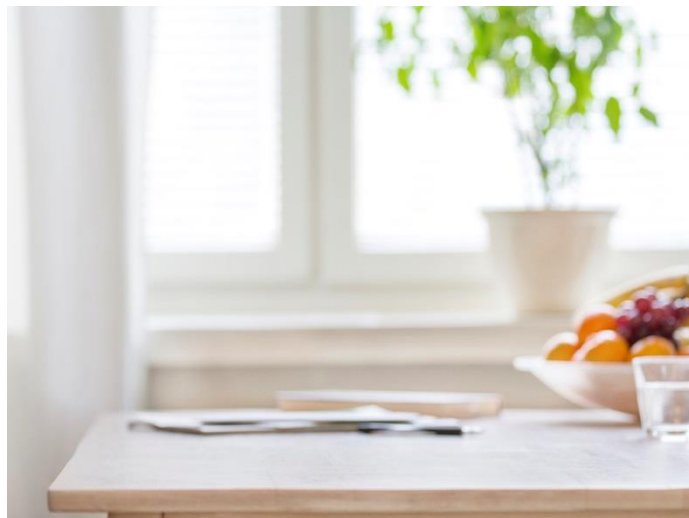
Nearly one in three deaths in the U.S. each year is caused by heart disease or stroke. The CDC estimates that 200,000 of these deaths could have been prevented. Health habits, such as stopping smoking, more physical activity and healthy eating all play a role in prevention.

Every room in your home offers at least one opportunity to prevent heart disease. We'll walk you through your house or apartment to discover ways to improve your and your family's heart health.

## Kitchen

Your healthy home renovation starts in the kitchen. Don't worry; we're not going to knock down any walls. We're simply suggesting some ways to boost your intake of foods with heart health benefits.

- Make room in the fridge and freezer for lots of fruits and veggies.
- Use a ridged stovetop grill pan or the broiler to grill meats and veggies. (Put the mini-fryer in your next yard sale.)
- Keep the pantry well stocked with lower-sodium tomato sauce, salsa, soups, beans and salad dressing.
- Buy a scale to make it easy to measure out healthy portion sizes.



## Family room

This is where you come to unwind. You stretch out in the plush recliner, grab the remote and de-stress. But why not multi-task and add some physical activity to the mix?

- Keep smaller free weights handy to do arm curls during the commercials.
- Clear enough room so you and others can dance, hula-hoop, do stretching exercises or work out with an exercise video.
- Require that your kids earn TV or screen time with active playtime. (Impose a similar rule on yourself!)

For optimal heart health, adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week. That's 30 minutes every day for five days.

## Home office

Your computer is a handy wellness tool. It can track your activity, calorie intake and health risk factors. Develop a plan to reduce your risks. Be sure to get up and stretch every hour while at your computer. Sitting too long can harm your heart and blood vessels.

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## Bathroom

If you own a scale, you probably keep it in your bathroom. And it's probably time to check your weight. If you're overweight, you can reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes by losing weight and keeping it off.

## Bedroom

Sleep, along with diet and exercise, is a cornerstone of health. Lack of sleep may increase heart disease and stroke risk. Shoot for seven to nine hours per night. Some sleep tips:

- Turn off the TV and other electronic devices well before going to sleep.
- Turn down the thermostat before going to bed.
- Go to bed and get up at about the same time every day, even on weekends.

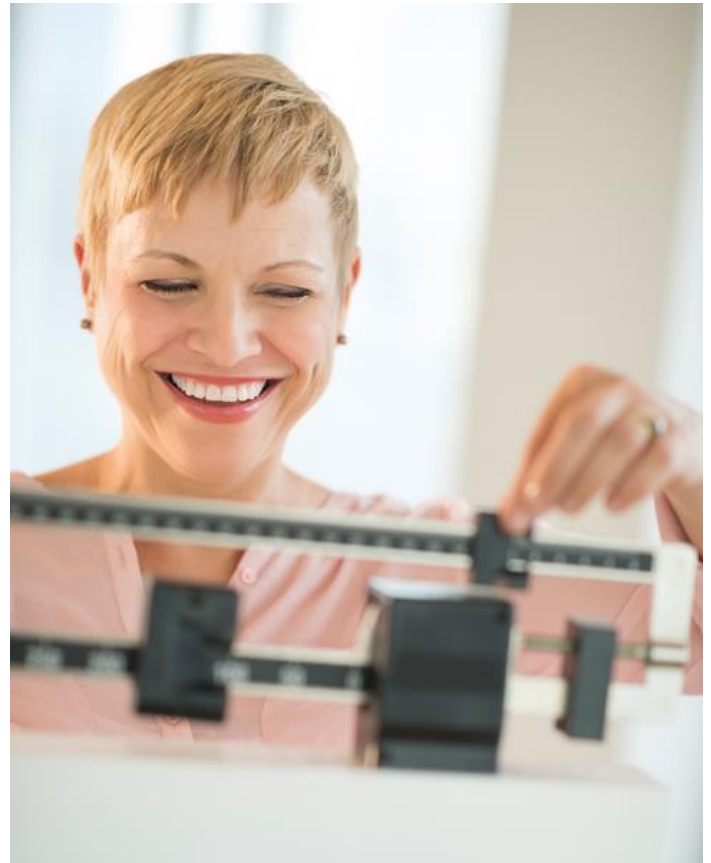
## Patio/backyard

Once spring arrives and the ground warms up, dedicate a patio pot or corner of the flowerbed to a salad garden. Plant cherry tomatoes, spinach or dark salad greens for a supply of fresh salad fixings throughout the summer. Sow seeds in two-week intervals to keep the harvest going longer.

Remember this healthy rule of thumb: Cover at least half of your dinner plate with vegetables or fruits. They supply potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure. They're also low in calories and high in fiber, which helps you maintain a healthy weight.

## Declare a tobacco-free zone

Make it clear to family members and guests that your home is smoke-free. This is a zero tolerance policy. Tobacco use raises health risks for all members of the household. Adults exposed to secondhand smoke are also at risk for heart disease and lung cancer. Children are at risk for asthma and infections. The toxins from tobacco smoke continue to pollute the home environment for up to six months after a smoker has quit.



## Summary

When it comes to preventing heart disease and stroke, lifestyle choices really do matter. These healthy choices start at home.

- Every room in your house offers you an opportunity to improve your health.
- Keep healthy, low-sodium foods on hand in your kitchen.
- Use the family room to get some moderate physical activity.
- Make your bedroom a place for restful sleep.
- Don't smoke inside or outside of your home.

## Sources:

- [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org)
- <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2016/09/20/tobaccocontrol-2016-053119.abstract>