

THE HEALTHY CPA

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February 2025

Heart Boosters

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Your heart is an important organ that keeps blood pumping and carries oxygen to every cell. It does so much for you, so it's up to you to return the favor and treat it right. Here are ten things you can do to keep your heart pumping strong.

- 1 Learn your risk factors for heart disease.** Talk with your health care provider about your family history and medical history to develop a personalized care plan.
- 2 Know your blood sugar,** blood pressure, blood cholesterol and waist circumference numbers. Discuss any changes you need to make with your provider.
- 3 Eat well.** Plan healthy meals with half a plate of vegetables and fruit, a quarter plate of whole grains and a quarter plate of protein-rich foods, such as fish, tofu and poultry.
- 4 Move often.** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. Add in some stretching and resistance training, too. Even a few minutes of activity is better than none.
- 5 Take steps to quit smoking.** Smoking is linked to heart attacks and high blood pressure. It's important to avoid using cigarettes and vapes. **Note:** Scientists haven't determined if e-cigarettes have potentially harmful, long-term effects.
- 6 Cut back on alcohol.** Having just one drink a day can increase your risk of heart disease or stroke. If you don't drink, don't start.
- 7 Get enough sleep.** Both too little and too much sleep are linked to heart disease. Aim for seven to nine hours per night.
- 8 Reduce stress.** Find ways to lower chronic worry and tension, such as exercise, socializing, being in nature, snuggling with a pet or seeking therapy.
- 9 Have regular checkups.** They're the foundation of heart health.
- 10 Take medications as prescribed.** Don't skip doses if you are feeling better or your numbers are controlled. It means the medicine is working.



BEST bits

- **Electrolytes are important for bodily functions.** Potassium, calcium, sodium chloride, magnesium, phosphate and bicarbonate normally keep body fluids, blood pressure, bones, muscles and nerves healthy. But high or low electrolytes can result in a host of symptoms, including fatigue, palpitations, headaches and indigestion. There are numerous causes for electrolyte imbalances, including dehydration, eating disorders, kidney and liver diseases, or taking diuretics, laxatives or certain antibiotics. If you have any of these medical problems or you use a drug which causes electrolyte disturbance, such as a diuretic, get your electrolytes tested regularly, and talk to your health care provider about it.
- **Light physical activity boosts the odds of healthy aging.** Using findings from the long-running Nurses' Health Study, a Harvard-led research team found walking, housework and other light exercise can significantly increase the odds of reaching age 70 and beyond free of memory issues and chronic illness. **Another reason to get off the couch:** The research revealed every additional two hours of watching TV cuts the odds of healthy aging by 12%.
- **Go compost.** Food scraps and yard waste account for 30% of our garbage, but we can compost it instead. Consider composting at home. Start with a bin (you can buy or make one). Then research the basics of layering greens (high nitrogen), such as vegetable scraps and coffee grounds, and browns (high carbon), such as dry leaves, sawdust and wood chips, in the bin. The benefits? You reduce food waste and you can use the compost as mulch in your garden, if you have one. Or check to see if your city or county has a composting program. **Tip:** Don't put plastic produce stickers in compost. They don't break down and can contaminate soil where compost is used. Learn more at epa.gov/recycle/composting-home.



February is American Heart Month.

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, [Jump-Start Your Immunity](#), is at personalbest.com/extras/25V2tools.

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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EXPERT advice

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Q: Is waking up at night okay?

A: It's normal to wake up one or two times a night. Waking up more frequently can occur if you drink liquids in the evening, especially caffeinated or alcoholic beverages, or have certain physical and mental health conditions or a poor sleep environment.

Physical and mental causes: People with frequent urination, pain, breathing problems, digestive disorders, hormonal changes or dementia may wake up more often at night. So do those with stress, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety and schizophrenia. Other culprits include sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea and restless legs syndrome.

Here are some ways to improve your slumber:

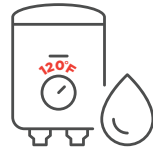
- **Limit** your evening intake of fluids, including alcoholic and caffeinated drinks.
- **Aim** for seven to nine hours of sleep each night.
- **Go** to bed and wake up at about the same time each day.
- **Turn** off all screens at least one hour before bed.
- **Engage** in a relaxing bedtime ritual, such as reading or meditation.

See your health care provider for an evaluation if health issues often disrupt your sleep.

Preventing Burn Injuries at Home

Nearly half a million people seek medical treatment every year for burn injuries — with more than 300 children receiving emergency treatment for burns every day. Most accidental burns happen in the kitchen and the bathroom, but they can happen anywhere in the home.

Here are some of the best ways to prevent burn injuries:



SET your hot water heater at 120°F or lower to prevent scalding. Always test water before letting children or the elderly get into a tub or shower.

KEEP matches, lighters and chemicals out of reach and locked up.

NEVER leave your stove unattended. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove so they are not accidentally bumped or spilled.

WEAR short sleeves or roll up your sleeves when cooking or grilling. Pull your hair back.

USE long-handled barbecue tools when grilling.

DON'T hold a child while cooking, grilling or starting a fire.

MAKE sure oven mitts and potholders are dry when using them. Moisture retains heat and can scald you.



PLACE safety barriers around the fireplace, and never leave a child unsupervised near a fire.

KEEP working fire extinguishers within easy reach.

INSTALL smoke detectors in your home and test them regularly.

LEAVE fireworks to the professionals. Don't attempt to light them on your own.

REMEMBER that sparklers heat up to more than 1000°F. Never let children under five use sparklers. Always supervise children older than five while they use sparklers.

Caution: Everyone should wear gloves while handling sparklers. And check for fireworks bans. **Tip:** Enjoy a professional fireworks show instead.



 National Burn Awareness Week is February 2 to 8.