HEALTHY LIVING HABITS

Living a healthy lifestyle can help keep blood pressure, cholesterol, and sugar at normal levels and lower the risk for heart disease.

Healthy habits include:

- **Eating a healthy diet**
- **Maintaining a healthy weight**
- **Getting enough physical activity** - 2 1/2 hours of moderate-intensity exercise per week is recommended
- **Not smoking**
- **Limiting alcohol use** - Men should have no more than 2 drinks per day, women should have no more than 1 drink per day.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

**Check cholesterol every 5 years**
If you have high cholesterol, diet, medications and lifestyle changes can help reduce your risk for heart disease. You may need to have cholesterol checked more often if you have a family history and/or certain risk factors.

**Make sure your blood pressure is well-controlled**
If you have high blood pressure, your health care team might recommend some changes in your lifestyle or advise you to lower the sodium in your diet; your doctor may also prescribe medication when necessary to help lower your blood pressure.

**Manage diabetes with care**
If you are diagnosed with prediabetes or diabetes, talk with your health care team about treatment options. Your doctor may recommend certain lifestyle changes to help keep your blood sugar under good control.

**Take your medications as instructed**
If you take medication to treat high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, follow your doctor’s instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don’t understand something. Never stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Total cholesterol is a measure of the total amount of cholesterol in your blood and is based on the HDL, LDL, and triglycerides numbers.

**Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol** makes up the majority of the body’s cholesterol. LDL is known as “bad” cholesterol because having high levels can lead to plaque buildup in your arteries and result in heart disease and stroke.

**High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol** absorbs cholesterol and carries it back to the liver, which flushes it from the body. HDL is known as “good” cholesterol because having high levels can reduce the risk for heart disease and stroke.

**Triglycerides** are a type of fat found in your blood that your body uses for energy. The combination of high levels of triglycerides with low HDL cholesterol or high LDL cholesterol can increase your risk for heart attack and stroke.

*Data and statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*