

Saint Mary's Health and Wellness asks,
did you know?

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Saint Mary's Health and Wellness Services

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Heart-to-Heart

Your HEART needs loving care

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for American women. Some risk factors, such as family history and age, can't be changed but there are many ways to help protect your heart from disease and stroke.

- Have a Cardiac Disease Risk Assessment
- Consult your doctor about your personal risks for heart disease and stroke. Follow their advice for health tests, lifestyle changes and therapies, including medications.
- Don't Smoke
- Smoking more than doubles your risk for heart disease. Secondhand smoke is also very harmful.
- Control Your Blood Pressure

Help control your blood pressure by exercising regularly, eating right, limiting sodium and alcohol and not smoking. Have your blood pressure checked as recommended and be sure to take medication as needed.

Control Your Cholesterol

Limit foods high in cholesterol. Saturated fats and trans fat in your diet also raise cholesterol. Have your cholesterol checked as recommended and take medications if needed.

Eat Right

Emphasize heart healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains in your diet. Limit sodium and get no more than 30% of your daily calories from fat.

Get Active

Regular aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, swimming and biking, strengthens your heart. Moderate intensity activities, including leisure walking, housework and gardening, are also beneficial. Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most (preferably all) days of the week.

Manage Stress

Stress increases your blood pressure and heart rate. Take time to relax. Exercise also helps reduce stress.

Avoid Being Overweight

If you are overweight, make the effort to lose those extra pounds. Overweight and obesity contribute to heart disease and stroke.

Recognize the Signs of Heart Disease and Stroke

- Chest discomfort – This can occur in the center of the chest lasting more than a few minutes or it may go

away and return. It can feel like pain, pressure, squeezing or fullness.

- Discomfort or pain in other parts of your upper body, including one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Nausea, lightheadedness or indigestion type symptoms.
- Breaking out in a cold sweat.
- Shortness of breath, often accompanied by chest discomfort, but can occur *before* the chest discomfort.