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HEALTHY
THINGS YOU
CAN DO
IN MINUTES



HEART &™
STROKE
FOUNDATION

WHAT IF WE TOLD YOU THAT A HEALTHIER YOU IS WITHIN REACH — *in just minutes a day?*

Dancing in your living room, eating unbuttered popcorn or measuring your waist are examples of small steps you can take toward the bigger yet achievable goal of lowering your risk of stroke and heart disease.

In this book you'll find 100 easy, actionable tips, including recipes, links to resources and motivating stories about people like you who met their health goals. Each tip promises two things:

1. It's something simple enough that you can do it today — or tomorrow or every day. There's no big prep or planning required.
2. Each tip offers a healthy action that targets one or more risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

Nearly 9 in 10 Canadians are living with at least one modifiable risk factor that they can change. And because 80 per cent of premature heart disease and stroke is preventable, today is the day to begin.

So let's get started... one small step at a time.

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Eat Better



Savouring homemade grilled pizza, juicy oranges or glazed salmon doesn't sound like a hardship, does it? These heart-healthy eating tips are all about making it easy to bite into something better for you. Try one, some or all of these suggestions; they'll help you limit fat, salt and sugar and get more fibre, especially if you fill half your plate with fruit and veggies at meals or snacks.

Already doing a suggested tip? Check it off! You're taking care of your heart.

All recipes are available at heartandstroke.ca/recipes.

■ ROAST YOUR DINNER

Instead of frying in oil, turn that oven up to 400 °F (200 °C) and roast your meat, fish or poultry, along with some veggies. Baking, barbecuing, broiling, grilling, poaching and steaming all use minimal oil, too.

Heart-healthy recipe: *Pork tenderloin with red onion compote*

■ TRADE IN THE SUGAR

Skip your usual afternoon sugar boost and snack on a handful of unsalted nuts instead. A ¼ cup serving of nuts, four times a week, can reduce your risk of heart disease.

■ EAT THE RAINBOW

Increase your intake and variety of fibre-rich fruits and vegetables by focusing on a specific colour for the day. Have you tried purple kale or dragonfruit before? Try summer kiwis, winter pomegranates and other seasonal treats, too.

■ GO WITH THE GRAIN

Try replacing at least half of your white rice or pasta with brown or wild rice, bulgur or quinoa. Whole grains are higher in fibre and lower in fat — making you feel full, faster.

Heart-healthy recipe: *Quinoa, black bean and mango salad*



Photo provided by CanolaInfo.org

■ THINK PLANT PROTEINS

Include beans, lentils or tofu in one of your meals today. They're great meat alternatives, low in fat and packed with protein. Fibre in beans can help lower cholesterol, too.

Heart-healthy recipe: *Lentil millet burgers*

■ SAVOUR A SLICE

Order a veggie pizza or better yet, make your own with pita bread, vegetables and lower fat cheese to help keep your waistline in check. Restaurant pizza with processed meats can be very high in fat and salt — ask for nutrition information before you order.

■ GO FISH

Serve fish for dinner tonight. (Deep fried fish and chips don't count!) Fish, especially fatty fish, is a great source of heart-healthy omega-3 fats plus protein and other nutrients. Fatty fish include salmon, herring, mackerel, canned sardines and trout.

Heart-healthy recipe: *Egg white, trout and potato frittata*

■ SAVE IT FOR LATER

Don't clean your plate at dinner tonight (especially if you're at a restaurant, which often offer oversized servings). Try portioning some of it out for a packed lunch tomorrow.

■ SHAKE YOUR SALT HABIT

Instead of reaching for the salt, spice things up with fresh or dried herbs. Try dill with fish, paprika with chicken or ginger with beef. (Skip salt in cooking water, too.) Reducing your salt intake helps lower your blood pressure.

■ PREP FOR THE MUNCHIES

Take 15 or 20 minutes to wash and cut raw fruit and veggies. Keep them in your fridge for a quick and easy snack.



■ **SALMON IT UP TONIGHT!**

Try the quick recipe below or go even simpler by roasting it with lemon and dill or honey mustard. Salmon packs protein and heart-protecting omega-3 fatty acids.



Salmon and pepper oven stir fry

Prep time: 15 min | Cook time: 15 min | Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 2 tsp (10 mL) hoisin sauce
- 4 salmon fillets, skin removed
(about 1¼ lb/570 g total)
- ½ cup (125 mL) panko breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) whole flax seeds
- 1½ tsp (7 mL) chopped fresh thyme
- 1 each yellow and orange
bell peppers, sliced
- 3 cups (750 mL) chopped Swiss chard
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) minced fresh ginger
- 1 tsp (10 mL) sesame oil

Directions

- 1.** Brush salmon fillets with hoisin sauce to coat. In a shallow dish combine breadcrumbs, flax seeds and thyme. Dredge salmon in breadcrumb mixture to coat evenly and place on parchment paper lined baking sheet; set aside.
- 2.** In a large bowl, toss together yellow and orange peppers, Swiss chard, garlic, ginger and oil. Divide between 2 large pieces of foil and fold up to seal. Place packets and baking sheet in 425 °F (220 °C) oven for about 15 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested.
- 3.** Arrange vegetables on four plates and lay a salmon fillet on top.

Nutritional Information (per serving):

Calories 348; Protein 31 g; Total fat 19 g; Saturated fat 4 g; Cholesterol 80 mg; Carbohydrates 13 g; Total sugars 3 g; Added sugars 0 g; Fibre 3 g; Sodium 177 mg; Potassium 786 mg.

Recipe developed by Emily Richards, PH Ec.

■ POP THAT CORN

Got the munchies? Plain, air-popped popcorn can be a rich source of fibre, which has been shown to reduce your risk of heart disease, obesity and certain types of cancer.

■ SWAP OUT THE OIL

Try stir frying with low sodium chicken broth or wine instead of oil tonight. Finding alternative ways to cook your favourite meals can go a long way toward reducing the amount of fat you eat.

■ GO NUTS

Spread 1 to 2 tablespoons of natural hazelnut, almond or peanut butter on your toast or crackers today. Nut butters offer protein and healthy fats that keep cholesterol in check.

■ BOOST BETA-CAROTENE

Eat a dark green and an orange vegetable today. They're full of beta-carotene, which can help slow or prevent plaque buildup in your arteries.

Heart-healthy recipe: *Carrot squash soup*

■ CHOOSE A BETTER CRACKER

Not all crackers are created equal; some are surprisingly high in fat and sodium. Check the **Nutrition Facts table** on the package to choose crackers that are low sodium and high in fibre, which are just as tasty!

■ KNOW WHAT ONE SERVING* LOOKS LIKE



A medium fruit:

A medium fruit is about the size of your fist or a tennis ball



Meat, fish and poultry:

A deck of cards



Cheese:

The size of four dice



Vegetables:

A computer mouse



Grains:

A hockey puck or CD, depending on the type

*Serving sizes based on recommended amounts in Canada's Food Guide.

■ **BE INSPIRED!**

Learn how Carolyn lost weight the natural way

Online tool helped her make healthy changes that she could stick to.



At 68, Carolyn Swadron is back to her high school weight. And she didn't diet, buy special food or join a gym to get there.

Carolyn's turning point came while watching a DVD of a friend's retirement party with images of her younger, slimmer self. "It was uncomfortable to watch," she says. "I just wished that I could look like that again."

A few months later, she learned that she had high cholesterol and started on medication.

Then an email arrived from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, with a link to the Healthy Weight Action Plan™, a free 12-week program that helps users build healthy habits to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

She signed up — although she was skeptical. "I started my first diet at 10 years old. With every diet, I'd lose a few pounds and then gain them back."

On the plan, Carolyn lost an average of a pound a week, simply by eating the right foods and working more steps into her day. She reached her goal weight a year later and her doctor took her off cholesterol medication.

"I feel great," says Carolyn, who plans to continue. "I'm so grateful that I found this plan, because it enabled me to look the way I want and improve my health."

*Do you have a few pounds you could lose? Register for the **Heart&Stroke Healthy Weight Action Plan™** and other eTools today.*

Find them at heartandstroke.ca/ehealth.

■ **SPOT THE HIDDEN FATS**

When you're dining out, pass on cream sauces, deep-fried, pan-fried and scalloped menu items.

■ **BUY HEALTHIER CEREAL**

When you buy cereal, look for whole grains and choose one with less than 6 grams of sugar and more than 4 grams of fibre per 1 cup (30 gram) serving.

■ **DON'T BOTHER PEELING**

Potato skin is a source of healthy fibre. Instead of peeling spuds, just give them a good scrub before cooking.

■ **WASH AWAY SALT**

Drain and rinse canned beans and veggies to get all the healthy benefits without all the added salt.

Heart-healthy recipe: *Bowl of chili soup*

■ **NOSH ON CITRUS**

Eat an orange today for a boost of vitamin C and fibre. Citrus fruits contain soluble fibre, which can help lower blood cholesterol and control blood sugar.

■ **DITCH THE CREAM**

Replace the cream in your coffee or tea with lower fat milk. Adding just a tablespoon of cream to your morning pick-me-up adds up to 50 calories! Higher calorie diets can lead to weight gain and a bigger heart disease risk.

■ **MIX UP YOUR SALAD**

Surprise your taste buds with a leafy green salad combining arugula, cress, spinach and chicory. Leafy greens are bursting with healthy vitamin K, folate, iron and beta-carotene.

■ **CUT LIQUID CALORIES**

Drink enough fluids to stay alert and focused, but stick to water or lower fat milk. Pass on the sugar-laden beverages, including juice.

■ **PLAN ON CANS**

Stock up on unsalted canned or frozen veggies, which contain the same nutrients as fresh.

■ **SKIP TAKE-OUT TONIGHT**

This one-pan recipe will be ready faster than a delivery can get to your door. Home cooking lets you limit the amount of salt, sugar and saturated fat that goes into each dish.

Sweet potato chicken skillet dinner

Prep time: 15 min | Cook time: 25 min | Makes: 3-4 servings

Ingredients

- 2 tsp (10 mL) canola oil
- 1 pkg (12 oz/375 g) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp (5 mL) herbes de provence or Italian herb seasoning
- 1 large sweet potato (1 lb/450 g), peeled and cut into 1 cm (½ inch) cubes
- 1 cup (250 mL) sodium-reduced chicken broth
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) tomato paste

Directions

1. In large nonstick skillet heat oil over medium heat and cook chicken, onions, garlic and herbes de provence for 8 minutes or until golden.
2. Add sweet potato, broth and tomato paste and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat and simmer gently for 15 minutes or until sweet potatoes are tender.

Nutritional Information (per serving):

Calories 308; Protein 33 g; Total fat 5 g; Saturated fat 1 g; Cholesterol 73 mg; Carbohydrates 32 g; Fibre 5 g; Total sugars 11 g; Added sugars 0 g; Sodium 316 g; Potassium 980 mg.

Recipe developed by Emily Richards, PH Ec.

■ **GO SKINLESS**

Remove the skin before cooking a healthy chicken dinner tonight. You'll be reducing fat and calories.

■ **SPICE UP A SPUD**

Add kick to your baked potato. Try salsa as a topping, instead of butter and salt.

■ **MEASURE YOUR OIL**

Pour oil into a teaspoon before adding to cooking. Free pouring increases fat intake.

■ **SWAP YOUR DAIRY**

Opt for lower fat choices when you're buying yogurt, cheese or sour cream. Dairy products, while high in calcium, can also be high in fat and sugar. Choose wisely.

Get Active



Research shows that being physically active every day tunes up your body and your mind. Aim to get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate- to vigorous-intensity exercise. You don't need to make it a marathon — even 10 minutes of activity counts toward the total.

*Try some of these ideas and get more by searching **healthy living** at heartandstroke.ca.*

■ **AIM FOR 10,000 STEPS**

Get off the bus one stop earlier or park a few blocks from your destination and walk the rest. Taking 10,000 steps a day will help you stay healthy and fit. Invest in a pedometer and discover the benefits of even a few minutes of walking.

■ **TRAIN ON THE CHEAP**

Do bicep curls, overhead presses and lateral raises with two cans of soup or beans. These activities help maintain strong bones and muscles.

■ **STRETCH IT OUT**

Recharge your batteries by doing some stretches at your desk. Try a couple of shoulder rolls and neck circles each hour. Stretching is an important part of any exercise program. You'll gain limber joints, improved circulation and lower stress.

■ **MAKE A LIST**

Write down all of the activities you enjoy, such as biking, yoga and skating, and note the health benefits of each. Then, block off time in your schedule to do one. Being intentional will help you stay active.



■ **BE INSPIRED!**

Find out how Sean stood up for his health

Writer Sean McNeely was logging too much chair time. Here's how he changed.



When I saw the numbers, my jaw dropped. Sure, I had heard the phrase “sitting is the new smoking,” but I didn’t realize how much sitting could potentially shorten my life.

According to a study from the University of Leicester in Britain, those who sit all day face:

- *147 per cent increased risk of heart disease or stroke*
- *90 per cent greater risk of dying from a cardiac event.*

That’s scary. Apparently the average adult spends 50 to 60 per cent of their day sitting.

Tracking my own time at work, I learned that I sat at my desk for approximately seven hours. So I got moving with the following suggestions from my colleague, Elisabeth Smitko, a kinesiologist and certified personal trainer:

- *I had my first “walking meeting,” and took the stairs instead of the elevator.*
- *I walked outside the building to get lunch.*
- *I got out of my chair once every hour to get a glass of water, stretch or straighten part of my desk.*

By the end of my first day, I had walked a total of 8,000 steps and felt more energized and alert than usual. Plus, I realized that I was just as effective while in motion. Do the same and get out from behind your desk today — your heart will thank you.

■ **MAKE WAVES**

Find a public pool, beach or hotel and go for a swim. Swimming and water aerobics can be just as effective as running on a treadmill or riding a stationary bike. It gets your heart rate up and improves strength.

■ **WALK THE COURSE**

Play a round and leave the golf cart behind. Golfing can be great moderate exercise if you walk. Be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day.

■ **HAVE A BALL**

Shoot some hoops alone or with friends in the driveway or hit a tennis ball around. Aerobic activities help strengthen the heart and lungs.

■ **TAKE THE STAIRS**

Avoid the elevator and escalator today. If climbing several flights of stairs seems daunting, start by taking the stairs down one or two flights. Try adding an extra flight up or down tomorrow.

■ **FILL YOUR WATER BOTTLE ONLY HALF FULL**

You'll finish it faster, and can get up from your chair for a quick walk and refill.

■ **HIT THE TRAILS**

Explore a local park or trail and discover the great outdoors in your own community.

■ **PLAN A WEEKEND ACTIVITY**

Call a friend or line up your family for some active fun this weekend. Anything goes, from driveway shinny to bowling.

■ **GET UP, STAND UP**

Sitting for long stretches? Set a timer to remind yourself to stand up and move around every 20 or 30 minutes. Even if you're active regularly, prolonged sitting can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

■ **GET SOME AIR**

Instead of sitting in the office, suggest a walking meeting to the nearest coffee shop.

■ **TURN ON THE TUNES**

Who says exercise can't be fun? Turn up the music and dance to your heart's content.

■ **WALK FOR A CAUSE**

Sign up for a charity walk today and put some training walks in your calendar.

■ **PUSH YOURSELF**

How many push-ups can you do in a minute? Do them daily to build muscle and maintain bone strength.

RESEARCH RESULTS:

Reducing risk with small victories

Dr. Jafna Cox takes a custom approach to encourage healthier habits.



Prevention works — particularly if it's personalized. Researchers led by Dr. Jafna Cox, the Heart and Stroke Foundation Cardiovascular Outcomes Research Chair in Atlantic Canada, recently studied 1,500 Nova Scotians with high, medium and low heart disease risk. His team gave each participant an individualized intervention strategy based on their attitudes and health.

"If someone's overweight and has no intention of changing, that person needs a different approach than someone who's willing to diet and exercise," explains Dr. Cox.

Study participants chose a risk factor to tackle and researchers suggested services such as behaviour counselling and smoking cessation, fitness and nutrition programs. Early wins motivated progress. The results: almost half of the participants at high risk of heart disease reduced that risk by 25 per cent or more.

Intrigued? Get a customized report with your own recommendations by completing the free Heart&Stroke Risk Assessment™ at heartandstroke.ca/risk today.

■ TAKE THE LONG WAY

Every step counts. Walk to the washroom that is farthest away from your desk at work, or take the long way to the corner store. Little bits of exercise can be a lifesaver.

■ GROW ON

Plant fruit, vegetables or flowers in your yard or balcony, rake leaves or pull weeds. Gardening and doing household chores can count as moderate or vigorous activity, depending on the intensity.

■ STAY HYDRATED

Drink a glass of water with every meal today. Skipping water breaks can lead to muscle and joint aches, confusion and dizziness.

■ MAKE IT SNAPPY

Go for three, 10-minute brisk walks today. Daily exercise doesn't have to come in one big chunk. Spread it out for the same health benefits.

■ TRY THE "TALK TEST"

When you exercise today, determine the intensity. Moderate- and vigorous-intensity exercise is best to lower your risk of heart disease and stroke.

- **Light:** You can carry on a conversation with little or no effort.
 - **Moderate:** It's a little difficult to talk.
 - **Vigorous:** Talking is very difficult.
-

■ GET LOOSE

Stretch those tight muscles while you're relaxing in front of the TV. Remember, stretching should be gentle. You'll feel a slight tension in your muscles, but you shouldn't feel pain.

■ WALK THE LINES

Don't just watch your kids or local athletes play sports at the neighbourhood park. Pace from one end of the playing field to the other.

Live Better



Small yet smart daily choices can have a powerful impact on your health. Taking a 10-minute meditation break, ordering water instead of a second glass of wine or, if you are a smoker, cutting back on the number of cigarettes you smoke, will help you feel great and contribute to a lower risk of heart disease and stroke.

Search *prevention* at heartandstroke.ca for more ideas on controlling stress and alcohol and becoming smoke free.

MANAGE YOUR STRESS

Let's start with stress. Juggling work, family obligations and an ever growing to-do list can make anyone feel anxious. But while good stress can be stimulating, bad stress raises your blood pressure and heart rate. Dial it down today with one of these options and search **stress** at heartandstroke.ca for more inspiration.



■ START A JOURNAL

Use a paper or online journal to write down when you feel stressed today. Noting your triggers can help you avoid them in future or better cope when they arise.

■ BUDDY UP

Meet a friend for an afternoon or evening walk and catch up. People with strong social support networks report less stress and fewer negative symptoms of stress.

■ POWER DOWN

Turn off your screens at least an hour before going to bed. You'll get a better night's sleep, helping you handle stress more easily.

■ LAUGH IT UP

Watch your favourite comedy show or movie. Laughter is the body's natural stress-busting mechanism.

■ KNOW THE SIGNS

Take our **Stress Management Test** on heartandstroke.ca and consider whether you have stress symptoms such as headaches, anxiety, irritability or stomach complaints.

■ GET IT DONE

Procrastinating puts on pressure. Get one thing off your plate — whether it's making an appointment or cleaning out the fridge — so you can really relax.

■ LET IT GO

Reacting negatively to something trivial? Tell yourself, "It's not that important." Anger can raise your blood pressure and heart rate — don't lose perspective and your health.

■ VISUALIZE A RELAXING PLACE

Think of a landscape you love or a fond memory. Visualization helps reduce stress and induce calm.

■ SAY "OM"

Book a yoga session today. Tai chi, Pilates and other types of exercise also relieve stress.

■ BE INSPIRED!

Learn how Grace saved herself

A lifestyle overhaul helped her make a full recovery after a heart attack.



With a high-powered job in software development and e-commerce and a European vacation just a week away, Grace Dierssen didn't have time to slow down. So she headed off to work the morning of her heart attack — wondering if the discomfort, exhaustion and breathing difficulties were only in her mind. Hours later, an ambulance rushed her to the emergency room.

Soon after the attack, Grace quit her job and made exercise and healthy eating a priority. "As women, we tend to put everyone else's needs ahead of ours," says Grace. "I've learned to stick up for myself, and put my health first."

Are you busy juggling career, parenting and elder care? Give your health the full attention it deserves before it's too late.

KEEP ALCOHOL UNDER CONTROL

Drinking red wine for your heart? You may want to hit the gym or munch on a salad instead. While some research has suggested moderate drinking can provide a benefit, too much alcohol will elevate your blood pressure and your heart disease and stroke risk. Try one of these moderation ideas tonight and get more information by searching **alcohol** at heartandstroke.ca.

■ KNOW THE HEALTHY LIMIT

According to **Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines**, women should have no more than two drinks a day, to a weekly maximum of 10. Men should have no more than three drinks a day, to a weekly maximum of 15.

■ MAKE COMPARISONS

90 per cent of males in Canada drink fewer than 15 drinks per week and 95 per cent of women in Canada drink fewer than eight drinks per week. If you typically have more, ask yourself why.

■ JUST ADD WATER

Reduce the strength of your drink with water and ice, and alternate each alcoholic drink with water. Your head and heart will thank you.

■ WATCH A MOVIE

It's a fun alternative to going out for a drink.



■ LOWER YOUR DRINK BUDGET

You know that purchase you've had your eye on? Put the money you would have spent on alcohol this week toward it. You might be surprised how quickly you're able to get your reward.

■ KNOW WHAT'S IN YOUR GLASS

Not all drinks have the same alcohol content. Use this infographic to learn what counts as one drink.

1 DRINK =



341 mL/12 oz (1 bottle) of regular strength beer (5% alcohol)



142 mL/ 5 oz wine (12 % alcohol)



43 mL / 1½ oz spirits (40% alcohol)

■ CONSIDER THE CALORIES

A 12-ounce bottle of 5% beer serves up 157 calories. Alcohol can very quickly add extra weight around your waist, contributing to high cholesterol.

■ EAT, THEN SIP

Enjoy a sandwich or light meal before you drink. Slowing down the intoxicating effects of alcohol will help you keep track of your drinks.

■ NAME YOUR DRINKING BUDDIES

Reflect on how your drinking behaviour is influenced by the people on your list.

■ PLAN IT OUT

Write down the number of drinks you plan to have this week and stick to it. By cutting back, you're protecting yourself long term from insomnia, liver damage and stomach ulcers.

GO SMOKE FREE

You know that smoking and chewing tobacco boosts your risk of stroke and heart disease, but you may not realize that even e-cigarettes may be harmful. The good news is that simply knowing your smoking triggers and cutting back can help you become smoke free. Talk to your healthcare professional, review resources at heartandstroke.ca (search **smoking**) and try at least one of the following tips each day.

■ START A DIARY

Keep track of how many cigarettes you have, the strength of your cravings, when and where you smoke and who you smoke with.

■ STALL FOR TIME

When you feel a craving coming on, try delaying the cigarette by 15 minutes. Gradually lengthen the time.

■ KNOW YOUR DOSES

Consider that 15 puffs of a cigarette equals 225 doses of nicotine a day, or 82,125 a year if you smoke 15 cigarettes a day.

■ HALF IT

Smoke only half a cigarette today, each time you light up.

■ WALK OFF FRUSTRATION

Feeling angry or annoyed? Take a walk or write in a diary instead of smoking.

■ SET A TIMER

See if you can reduce your cravings. Can you go smoke free for at least four hours?

■ ESTABLISH A QUIT DATE

Knowing when you want to be smoke free can help you set smaller, more achievable goals along the way, as well as motivating rewards.

RESEARCH RESULTS:

Helping smokers beat the habit

Scientific approach increases success rate for those going smoke free.



Dr. Andrew Pipe, a prevention and rehabilitation expert at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, helped create the renowned Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation (OMSC).

Working with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and Dr. Robert Reid, Dr. Pipe created the OMSC to help heart disease patients stop smoking.

The program enables healthcare workers to identify smokers, provide best practice counselling and cessation medications and offer followup for six months.

Smokers who try to quit with these supports experience double or triple the normal success rate with quitting long term. In fact, the OMSC program has been so effective, it's now available in over 180 hospitals and clinics across Canada.

*You can be smoke free, too. Within 48 hours you'll decrease your risk of having a heart attack, and within a year, you'll cut your chance of developing heart disease and stroke in half. For more information on quitting and quit-lines, visit heartandstroke.ca and search **smoke free** or get Health Canada resources at gosmokefree.ca or by calling 1-800-O-Canada.*

Take Care



In Canada, someone experiences a stroke every nine minutes and someone has a cardiac arrest every 13 minutes. So, take a few minutes today to learn the signs and how you can save a life. Safeguard your own life, too, by taking time to understand your risk factors and what you can do to control them.

Try one of the following actions today and read more at heartandstroke.ca.

■ THINK FAST

Stroke is a medical emergency; know the signs and you could save a life. Just remember the word FAST. Learn more at heartandstroke.ca/FAST.

LEARN THE SIGNS OF STROKE

FACE is it drooping?

A RMS can you raise both?

S PEECH is it slurred or jumbled?

T I ME to call 9-1-1 right away.

ACT **F A S T** BECAUSE THE QUICKER YOU ACT,
THE MORE OF THE PERSON YOU SAVE.

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■ DON'T WEIGHT

Like many Canadians, you may be overweight or obese, jacking up your likelihood of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease. Take action today by signing up for the free Heart&Stroke Healthy Weight Action Plan™; you can find it at heartandstroke.ca/ehealth. The free online program assesses your habits and offers a personalized plan and motivating goals.

■ CALL A FAMILY MEMBER TODAY

Talk with your parents and siblings about your family history. If any close relatives developed heart disease before age 55 or before menopause, or had a stroke before age 65, you're also at higher risk. First Nations people and those of African or South Asian descent are also more likely to have high blood pressure and diabetes. Plan as a family to get regular checkups and try healthy interventions such as the DASH diet to lower blood pressure (find out more at heartandstroke.ca/dash).

■ **DO A QUIZ**

Take 15 minutes today to fill out the confidential Heart&Stroke Risk Assessment at heartandstroke.ca/risk. Understanding how your medical and family history and lifestyle impacts your heart disease risk can motivate you to make healthy changes.

■ **LEARN THE SIGNS OF CARDIAC ARREST**

If someone suddenly collapses, is unresponsive to sound and touch and has abnormal or no breathing, they may be having a cardiac arrest. Call 9-1-1 immediately and start doing hands-only CPR. Use an automated external defibrillator (AED) if available. Learn more at heartandstroke.ca/cpr.

■ **BE INSPIRED!**

Find out how Vicki took control of her health

She had no idea her blood pressure was almost fatally high.



Vicki Olatundun felt full of energy after giving birth to her second child. But on a post-baby visit, a public health nurse realized Vicki's blood pressure put her in immediate danger of a stroke. She asked Vicki to remain calm, then called an ambulance.

Vicki spent five days in hospital and came home determined to change her lifestyle.

Maintaining a healthy body weight can lower blood pressure, so she downloaded and used the free <30 Days Challenge mobile app™. (Find it at heartandstroke.ca/ehealth). Since then, Vicki has lost almost 100 pounds, her blood pressure is well within normal and she feels fabulous.

"I'm thankful I didn't have to have a stroke before I made the lifestyle changes to lower my blood pressure," Vicki says. "Prevention for me is massive."

Are you at risk? Find out more at heartandstroke.ca/bloodpressure.

REVIEW THE DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT CHECK LIST

Make the most of your next appointment by going prepared. Print out the Know Your Numbers worksheet (search **Know your numbers** at heartandstroke.ca) and consider asking your healthcare practitioner these questions:

- Should I be concerned about my risk for heart disease and stroke? What factors are most relevant to me?
- What screening or diagnostic tests for heart disease and stroke do I need?
- How often should I return for check-ups?
- What is a heart-healthy eating plan for me? Should I see a registered dietitian or nutritionist to learn more?
- How can I add more physical activity to my day?
- What can you do to help me quit smoking and manage my cravings?

TRACK YOUR PRESSURE

By knowing and controlling your blood pressure, you can cut your risk of stroke by up to 40 per cent and heart attack by up to 25 per cent. Sign up for the free Heart&Stroke Blood Pressure Action Plan (find it at heartandstroke.ca/ehealth) today to assess, track and manage your blood pressure.

SPOT THE AEDs

Look for automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at your work, mall or community centre today. The Heart and Stroke Foundation has placed thousands in public spaces across Canada because they save lives with an electrical shock to the heart during a cardiac arrest.

KNOW HOW TO RECOGNIZE A HEART ATTACK

If you are experiencing any of these signs, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately. Learn more at heartandstroke.ca/heartsigns.



Chest discomfort

(uncomfortable chest pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain, burning or heaviness)



Discomfort in other areas of the upper body

(neck, jaw, shoulder, arms, back)



Shortness of breath



Sweating



Nausea



Light-headedness

RESEARCH RESULTS:

Good test for bad cholesterol

Researcher discovered a red flag for high cholesterol and heart attack risk.



Your doctor probably ordered a test of your blood cholesterol at your last check-up. (If not, ask about it.) One of the factors the lab likely measured was a protein called apo B. That's thanks to Dr. Robert Hegele. With support from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, he discovered that the gene controlling the apo B protein is related to "bad cholesterol" and can increase your risk of heart attack.

Further research led to apo B being included in the Canadian Cardiovascular Society guidelines for doctors across Canada (which Dr. Hegele co-authored), and to the simple test available today.

If your blood test shows high levels of apo B, your doctor will likely work with you to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke by cutting your intake of cholesterol, as well as trans fats and saturated fats. She may also advise medications.

Take Care

■ DOWNLOAD AN APP

The free, informative and empowering <30 Days Challenge iPhone and iPad app can help you gain a healthier heart in a mere month. Find it at heartandstroke.ca/ehealth.

■ LEARN CPR

Book a course on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Don't hesitate if you haven't been trained, though. If someone is having a cardiac arrest, call 9-1-1, ask for an AED and then start pushing hard and fast in the centre of the person's chest until the person starts to breathe normally without gasping. Don't stop until someone with more advanced medical training can take over. Learn more at heartandstroke.ca/cpr.

■ MEASURE YOUR WAIST

Too much fat around your middle elevates your risk of heart disease or stroke. See how your measurement compares to waist circumference guidelines (available at heartandstroke.ca/healthywaists).

■ **DO YOUR “TIMES” TABLES**

Recalling that smokers are three times more likely to have a stroke or die of heart disease can remind you to smoke only half of each cigarette today or lengthen the time between smoke breaks. Get the facts in **Just Breathe**, a pamphlet available at heartandstroke.ca, and talk to your doctor to talk about small steps to becoming smoke free.

■ **BEWARE OF FAINTING**

Read up about Sudden arrhythmia death syndrome (SADS) at heartandstroke.ca/heartsigns. If you or someone you know faints or experiences seizures during physical activity or high emotion, this can be a sign of SADS risk.

■ **EMAIL A FRIEND WITH COMMON GOALS**

Connect with a pal who is getting more active or share your health goal with a bestie. Telling your friends about your goal makes it real. Ask them to check in on your progress in a week.

■ **DON'T CLICK THAT LINK**

See a simplistic heart fact in your social media feeds or inbox? Think twice about reading or sharing it. Many well-meaning messages can be inaccurate or worse, prevent people from calling 9-1-1 immediately in the event of stroke or heart attack. Get the facts you need at heartandstroke.ca.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH

Learn more about heart disease and stroke and how to reduce your risk at heartandstroke.ca

- Assess your risk at heartandstroke.ca/risk
- Manage your health with our online tools at heartandstroke.ca/ehealth
- Follow our blog at blog.heartandstroke.ca

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Together we will make it happen.



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