

Understanding Heart Disease



According to the World Health Organization, heart disease is still one of the main causes of death around the world. It's important to know its risks and take steps to prevent it. Heart disease can refer to many conditions, including:

- Heart attack
- Coronary artery disease (CAD)
- Heart failure
- Arrhythmia
- Heart valve problems

Many factors can increase your likelihood of getting heart disease, like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking and a bad diet. Being aware of these risk factors is the first step toward managing them. Regular check-ups with your healthcare provider can help identify potential issues early on. There are also a few regular screenings to monitor your heart health. These screenings include:

- **Blood pressure.** Blood pressure screenings are one of the most important screenings for heart health. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so it can't be detected without being measured. Talk with your healthcare provider about how often you should have your blood pressure measured.
- **Cholesterol.** For people 20 years or older, regular blood tests that measure total cholesterol may help determine your risk level for heart disease.
- **Blood glucose.** High blood glucose, or blood sugar levels, puts you at a greater risk of developing diabetes. Untreated diabetes may lead to many serious medical issues and puts you at a greater risk of developing heart disease. A blood glucose test helps you and your doctor understand this risk.

By knowing the risks of heart disease and taking steps to prevent it, you can greatly reduce your chance of getting heart disease. Taking control of your heart health today can lead to a healthier tomorrow.

Learn more: [heart.org](https://www.heart.org) and [heart.org/en/healthy-living](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living)

HEART HEALTHY HABITS

Making conscious lifestyle choices can significantly reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

1. **Nutrition.** Try to eat healthy foods in general. Eat more whole foods like fruits and vegetables, lean protein, nuts, seeds, and healthy oils like olive and canola oil. Start by adding one fruit or vegetable to each meal every day!
2. **Be more active.** The American Heart Association recommends adults get 2 ½ hours of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week to better their heart health. Try going for a daily walk or dedicate two days a week to a more rigorous activity like biking, jogging or swimming.
3. **Quit tobacco.** Using nicotine products like cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vapes is the cause of a third of all deaths from heart disease. Quitting tobacco products is an important step to taking control of your heart health.
4. **Manage your blood sugar and blood pressure.** High blood sugar and blood pressure are an important part of your heart health but are often overlooked on a day-to-day basis. To build your long-term heart health, regularly monitor your blood sugar and blood pressure and work with your healthcare provider to manage both effectively.
5. **Control your cholesterol and manage your weight.** Cholesterol levels and weight are an important part of heart health. Work with your doctor to manage your cholesterol levels and your weight to build a healthier heart.

By making small changes to your lifestyle and habits, you can take steps to prevent heart disease and improve your overall health.

Cancer screening and prevention

February 4th is World Cancer Day. According to the American Cancer Society, more than 18 million people in the United States are either living with cancer or have a history with cancer. Below are some common cancers, how to screen for them and tips for preventing them from developing or worsening:

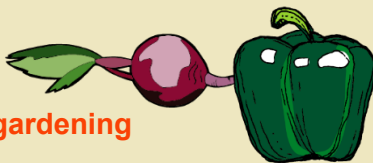
Cancer Type	Recommended Screenings	Prevention Strategies
Breast Cancer	Mammography (starting at age 40 or as recommended by a healthcare provider)	Maintain a healthy weight, exercise regularly, limit alcohol consumption and consider breastfeeding.
Prostate Cancer	PSA test (discuss with a healthcare provider starting at age 50)	Maintain a healthy weight, exercise regularly and consider a diet rich in fruits and vegetables
Cervical Cancer	Pap smear (starting at age 21), HPV testing	Maintain a healthy weight, exercise regularly and consider a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.
Lung Cancer	Low-dose CT scan (for high-risk individuals, such as heavy smokers)	Quit smoking, avoid secondhand smoke and minimize exposure to carcinogens
Skin Cancer	Regular skin self-exams, dermatologist check-ups	Use sunscreen, wear protective clothing and avoid excessive sun exposure

It's essential to consult with a healthcare provider to determine the best screening schedule and prevention strategies for your individual needs. They can help you assess your risk factors and develop a personalized plan.

Learn more: [worldcancerday.org/about/preventing-cancer](https://www.worldcancerday.org/about/preventing-cancer)

Find out what vegetables are best to plant each month in this guide from Real Simple:

[realsimple.com/home-organizing/gardening](https://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/gardening)



STUFFED PEPPERS



These stuffed peppers are not only convenient and easy to make, but a tasty heart healthy recipe!

Makes 4 servings.

Ingredients:

- 4 bell peppers (any color)
- 3/4 lb lean, ground turkey
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup uncooked brown rice
- 14.5 oz. canned, no-salt-added, diced tomatoes
- 1 clove fresh, minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon reduced sodium Italian seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 8 oz. canned, no-salt-added tomato sauce

Directions:

Before you begin, wash your hands.

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Cook rice according to package instructions (omitting salt). While the rice is cooking, in a skillet over medium heat, brown the turkey. Add the onion and cook for 3 minutes more (until the onion becomes translucent).
2. Wash the bell peppers and remove the tops, seeds and membranes. Set peppers in a 9x9 baking dish or line them up in a loaf pan, so they stand upright.
3. In a medium mixing bowl, mix turkey, rice, tomato, garlic, italian seasoning and pepper flakes. Spoon into each pepper. Spoon tomato sauce evenly over the top of the 4 peppers. Bake 1 hour in the oven, until peppers are tender.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Calories per serving	252
Sodium	68 mg
Fat	1.5 g
Saturated Fat	0.5 g
Carbohydrates	34 g
Protein	26 g
Cholesterol	53 mg
Total Sugars	20 g

Step Up For Your Heart



Keeping your heart healthy is important for your overall health. Your heart health can have a strong impact on how long you live and your quality of life, as your heart is the main organ that keeps your body running. Your heart pumps blood through your body to give your tissues and organs the oxygen and nutrients they need to function properly. A healthy heart ensures that this can happen! When your heart is healthy, it can do this job efficiently to make sure that your body's needs are met. But when heart health is compromised, it can have consequences for your entire body and overall health.

Your heart is responsible for:


- **Oxygen and nutrient delivery.** Your heart pumps blood that brings oxygen and nutrients to your cells. This helps them work and stay healthy.
- **Waste removal.** It also helps remove waste products from your body by transporting them to organs like the kidneys and liver for processing and elimination.

Poor heart health can lead to a range of serious health issues, including:

- **Heart disease.** Diseases like coronary artery disease (CAD), heart failure and irregular heartbeats can greatly affect your quality of life and life expectancy.
- **Stroke and cognitive decline.** Less blood flowing to the brain can cause a stroke or cognitive decline. This can affect your mental ability and independence.
- **Kidney disease.** The kidneys rely on a healthy blood supply to function properly. Poor heart health can lead to kidney disease or exacerbate existing kidney issues.
- **Reduced physical capability.** Heart problems can make it harder to do physical activities. This can make you feel less fit and healthy.

Maintaining good heart health is essential for preventing these and other related health issues. By prioritizing heart health, you're not just protecting your heart — you're supporting your overall health and enhancing your quality of life.

Your heart pumps blood through your body to give your tissues and organs the oxygen and nutrients they need to function properly. A healthy heart ensures that this can happen! Maintaining good heart health is essential for preventing health issues.



Learn more: [nhlbi.nih.gov/news](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/news)

FEBRUARY 2026



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month is an annual celebration that honors the rich achievements and culture of African Americans throughout the United States' history.

Learn more: blackhistorymonth.gov

WORLD CANCER DAY FEBRUARY 4

World Cancer Day is an internationally recognized day to raise awareness about cancer, its causes and its impact while promoting cancer research, prevention and treatment efforts.

Learn more: worldcancerday.org/take-action

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

American Heart Month, observed every February, is a reminder to prioritize heart health through awareness, education and action to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Learn more: nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-healthy-living

NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH

National Cancer Prevention Month provides an opportunity to spread awareness and take steps toward better health and wellbeing.

Learn more: preventcancer.org

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	Groundhog Day					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	Valentine's Day
15	President's Day	Chinese New Year Ramadan Begins	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28