

February Heart Health Month

Since February is considered as the heart health month, it is time to bring attention to the importance of cardiovascular health and what we can do to reduce our risk of cardiovascular disease.

Our heart is the most important muscle in your body because it pumps blood and oxygen to all of your organs. (Nazario, 2020) The heart beats roughly about 2.5 billion throughout our entire lifetime, pushing millions of gallons of blood to every part of the body. (Harvard Medical School, n.d) The blood flow carries oxygen, fuel, hormones, other essential cells and compounds. It also carries away all the waste products of metabolism. The heart is an important organ because when it stops, all essential body functions will fail instantly. (Harvard Medical School, n.d). Due to poor lifestyle choices, our body will accumulate cholesterol gunk inside the arteries called plaque, that restricts and limit blood flow through that nourishes the heart. When a plaque breaks apart, it can cause a heart attack or stroke (Harvard Medical School, n.d).

Heart disease is affecting 2.4 million Canadian adults and it is considered as the second leading cause of death in Canada (Government of Canada, 2017). We can all reduce our risk of getting heart disease by making healthy lifestyle choices such as quitting smoking, eating a healthy and balanced diet, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, monitoring blood pressure and cholesterol levels. (Government of Canada, 2017). Medication can also aid in heart-harming trends such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure before they cause serious damage and illness. Variety of devices and operations can also help support the heart if damage occurs (Harvard Medical School, n.d).

Heart Healthy Living Tips

Go for regular check-ups

°At least once a year physical checkup to make sure there are no new developed conditions that would put you at risk for heart disease. These checkups are also to make sure that you are controlling any conditions that you currently have.



Keep tabs on your blood pressure and cholesterol

°Do/use a home blood pressure device or a blood pressure machine that can be obtain or bought in pharmacies.

Do not skip medication if you already have

°If these medications are doing unpleasant side effects in your body, do not stop taking them. Instead, ask your physician about other options.

Do physical activity regularly

- °Being physically active is a major step towards good heart health.
- °Exercise is an effective activity to strengthen our heart muscle
- °Physical activity also regulates further buildup of cholesterol in our body that can prevent heart diseases and stroke.

Physical activity and lifestyle guidelines that can help strengthen heart

- °Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines integrate recommendations for physical activity for adults (18-64 years).

Aerobic Exercises

- °150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous aerobic activities.
- °Moderate: Brisk walking, walking, and biking.
- °Vigorous: Jogging, running, swimming, cross-country skiing.

Resistance Training

- °Muscle strengthening activities at least two times a week.
- °Example of exercises: Workouts with free weights and body weights, resistance band workouts, push-ups, squats, and chin-ups.

Light Physical Activities

- °Several hours of light exercises must be achieved throughout the day.
- °Standing, slow walking, and Basic stretches.

Other Tools that can help monitor heart health at home

- °Blood Pressure Monitor
- °Heart Rate Monitor
- °Pedometer
- °Activity Tracker



References

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Submitted by the Lifestyles Department

