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Healthy Insights

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Learn How to Be Heart Healthy

It is always the right time for you to learn how to be heart healthy and understand your risks for heart disease. Heart disease and the conditions that lead to it can happen at any age; it is happening to younger adults more and more often.

Half of all Americans have at least one of the top three risk factors of heart disease:

- 1. High Blood Pressure.** Millions of Americans of all ages have uncontrolled high blood pressure, which is one of the biggest risks for heart disease and other harmful conditions such as stroke.
- 2. High Cholesterol (blood/dietary).** Having diabetes and obesity, smoking, eating unhealthy foods, and not getting enough physical activity can all lead to unhealthy cholesterol levels.
- 3. Smoking.** Smoking damages the blood vessels and can cause heart disease.



Ways to Take Control of Your Heart Health

- **Don't smoke.** In the U.S., smoking is the leading cause of preventable death. If you smoke, talk to your healthcare provider about quitting.
- **Manage other health conditions.** Work with your healthcare team to manage your health conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- **Eat heart healthy.** Eat foods lower in trans-fats, saturated fats, added sugar, and sodium. Do your best to fill at least half your plate with vegetables and fruits.
- **Stay active.** Move for at least 150 minutes per week (2.5 hours).

continued

This resource has been adapted from
the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and *Million Hearts*®.

Risk Factors for Heart Disease

- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Unhealthy Lifestyle
- Family History
- Other Health Conditions
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Obesity
- Age
- Smoking

Note: Although you cannot control some of these risk factors, you should always work to lower the ones you **can** control.

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or email us at info@ipro.org.



IPRO Healthy Insights
1979 Marcus Avenue
Lake Success, NY 11042
(516) 209-5255

CHOLESTEROL: Blood vs. Dietary

Blood Cholesterol is a fat-like substance made by your liver. Your body needs it to make hormones and digest fatty foods.

Did you know that your body makes all the blood cholesterol it needs?

Dietary Cholesterol is found in foods such as meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, and dairy products. Studies suggest eating less dietary cholesterol is associated with reduced risk of heart disease, even though your overall risk depends on many factors.

Communicate with your healthcare professional.

Be sure to ask your healthcare professional about additional steps you can take to reduce your risk factors and protect your future!

For more information, visit

<https://millionhearts.hhs.gov>

<https://www.cdc.gov>

IPRO Healthy Insights is authored by Dr. Clare Bradley, IPRO's Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer, and a nationally recognized public health advocate.

IPRO is a non-profit organization that works with government agencies, providers and patients to measure and improve healthcare for all. For over 30 years we've made creative use of clinical expertise, emerging technology and data system solutions to make the healthcare system work better.