

health awareness

CTSI

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HEART MONTH

Do you know that heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death among men and women in the U.S.? February is Heart Month – the perfect time of year to learn more about heart disease prevention and to make healthy diet and lifestyle changes for you and your loved ones.

Healthy Eating

Eating a healthy diet is the best way to prevent heart disease. Take steps toward eating a diet high in lean protein, whole grains, and nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables. Limit unhealthy fats such as saturated and trans fats found in processed foods. Take strides to reduce your sodium and sugar intake. As a first step, consider keeping a food diary. You can use a notebook to record your food intake.

Start with the basics: Record the times of day you eat snacks and meals. Ask questions and jot down answers using the guidelines below.

Hunger Control Questions

By the end of the day, did you eat three solid meals? Did you feel full after eating? Did you eat filling foods? How was your water intake with and between meals? Did you consume at least 4-5 servings each of fruits and veggies?

Calorie-Reduction Questions

Did you limit food portions to the size of your fist? Did you keep meat proteins like chicken, pork, and fish, to 3 ounces (think: deck of cards)? What are your personal food “triggers?” Did you eat when you weren’t

hungry? What drove your motivation to eat? Was it emotion- or stress-driven, boredom, a certain social, work or family setting, etc.? Are there any compromises you can make to reduce calories? Can you find ways to reduce your sodium and sugar intake? For instance, experiment with a salt substitute. Try adding agave nectar or a natural sweetener to your morning coffee or tea instead of sugar. Or perhaps you prefer to completely abstain from the sweet taste altogether. In that case, you can change your go-to morning beverage to black coffee or tea, or choose low-fat or fat-free milk to dilute.

Food Choice Questions

Did you choose lean animal proteins, such as chicken, turkey, and fish? Did you choose

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whole grains instead of refined grain products (think: whole-grain bread vs. white bread, steel-cut or regular oatmeal vs. frozen waffles or bagels)? Remember, due to high fiber content, whole-grain options are actually more filling and keep your appetite satisfied for longer periods of time.

Techy Food Tracking Online

If a paper-based food diary isn't your style, you might prefer recording a more detailed account of your eating using an online food tracking tool such as myfitnesspal.com or sparkpeople.com. If you use a smartphone, many food tracking apps are available free of charge, allowing you to go mobile. Great solution for on-the-go types!

ZZZ's

Getting sufficient shut-eye is very important to your heart health. According to a 2011 American Heart Association study, substandard quality of sleep is linked to high blood pressure which can lead to heart disease. What's the right amount of sleep? That's a tricky question because the perfect amount of sleep is different for each individual. Most sources suggest an average of 6-8 hours of sleep per night for adults. Babies and children require more ZZZ's. As adults age, less sleep is required. In addition to the risk of high blood pressure, sleep deprivation can also make weight loss more challenging, can have a

negative effect on metabolism, and can trigger a vicious cycle of poor eating habits and cravings.

Exercise

If you are an exercise newbie, start small and build gradually. Focus on being more active by taking the stairs, or parking in the furthest parking space when you run errands. Take a brisk walk at lunch or in the evening with your family. If you currently do cardio, add some strength training to build muscle. Try completing several sets of strength-training exercises using lighter weights and higher repetitions. Check out yoga, dancing, grab a jump rope, or ride a bike. Living in Colorado, the options are endless! Another bonus - exercise helps you sleep more soundly.

Under Pressure

Stress management is also important in managing your heart health. Exercise is an effective

way to blow off steam and release stress. If a quiet, introspective activity speaks to you, try practicing yoga or meditation. Spending quality time with friends and family can also relieve stress, while others might enjoy alone time to recharge and destress. Much like exercise and sleep, it's best to know what works for yourself by exploring. Try a few activities to see what gives you pleasure and helps relieve the stress in your life.

Heart Health in 2016

Take your heart health beyond the month of February and make it a priority for the entire year. The benefits of eating healthy, exercising, and managing stress can prevent heart disease and many other medical conditions, transforming you into a healthier, happier, more energetic individual.

BENEFITS CORNER

As part of our Administrative Services Only Agreement with Anthem, Members now have access to the LiveHealth Online program. Members can connect with a U.S.-based certified doctor by two-way video chat in the privacy of their home 365 days a year 24/7. Doctors will be able to answer questions, make diagnoses and prescribe medications. This is mainly used for; Cold/flu symptoms, allergies, sinus infections and family health questions.

This service does not replace your PCP; it is another option when faced with a common health concern. If the online doctor is unable to handle your issue, you will be referred to the ER or your PCP. The cost is the same as your office visit co-pay, depending on your PPO plan enrollment. If enrolled in an HDHP plan which does not include office visit co-pays in the plan structure, your cost is \$49. If have any questions, please contact the CHP staff.