

June Is Men's Health Month

Did you know that men make up nearly 90 percent of sudden cardiac arrests? In honor of Men's Health Awareness Month this June, learn what steps you—and the men in your life—can take to reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

IDENTIFYING YOUR RISK

Your daily habits—as well as your family history—can put you at risk of developing heart disease and increase your chances of suffering a heart attack or stroke. Answering “yes” to just two of the statements below **quadruples** your risk of developing heart disease.

- I am 45 years or older.
- I have an immediate family member with high blood pressure who was diagnosed before age 55.
- I'm African American.
- I rarely or do not exercise.
- I like to add salt to my meals.
- I drink two or more alcoholic drinks per day.
- I take prescription drugs (such as Ritalin) that affect my blood pressure.
- I'm under a lot of stress.
- I've been diagnosed with high blood pressure and/or diabetes.

LOWERING YOUR RISK

Adopting everyday lifestyle habits can go a long way toward reducing your risk of heart disease. Focus on one or two habits per month, and track your progress as you go.

- **Exercise 30 minutes every day:** Take the stairs whenever possible, go dancing or join a sports league—it all counts!
- **Cut back on salt:** Read the nutrition labels of the products you buy at the grocery store and go for “sodium free” or “reduced sodium” alternatives. Cooking more and ordering in less is another natural way to control your sodium intake.
- **Eat whole foods:** Choose fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and lean protein over pre-made meals and takeout whenever possible.
- **Quit smoking:** Resources to kick the habit can be found at smokefree.gov.
- **Watch what you drink:** Men should have no more than two alcoholic and caffeinated beverages per day.
- **Relax:** If you're chronically stressed, try meditating, taking a walk or reading to calm and recenter yourself.
- **Try aspirin:** Studies have shown that taking a daily dose of aspirin (not acetaminophen or ibuprofen) can reduce the risk of heart attack in men over 50. Talk with your doctor before taking this or any form of medication, as taking aspirin daily carries certain health risks.

Source: www.menshealthnetwork.org