

HealthyLife®

LETTER

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QUICK HEALTHY

heart habits

A heart healthy lifestyle doesn't have to be overwhelming. These little changes can make a big difference:

1. ***Lower blood pressure with fruits and veggies.***
High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease. Swap out sweets or deep-fried foods for fruits and vegetables. They contain plenty of potassium, which is a mineral that helps to naturally lower blood pressure. Try to get 2.5 cups of veggies and 2 cups of fruit each day.
2. ***Favor healthy fats.***
The right kind of fats can be good for your heart. Fatty fish such as salmon contain omega-3 fats, which may prevent sudden death from a heart attack. Olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds all contain heart healthy unsaturated fat that can help lower bad cholesterol and may raise good cholesterol.



Easy food swaps for a healthy heart

Eating better for your heart doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, making some small substitutions in your diet each day can add up to better health. It doesn't require a big investment of time or money to make these changes:

INSTEAD OF:
CRACKERS
OR CHIPS



TRY: UNSALTED NUTS
AND SEEDS



Crackers and chips are processed foods with few vitamins and minerals. They're often loaded with salt, sugar or excess fat.

Nuts and seeds, on the other hand, contain heart healthy unsaturated fats that can improve blood cholesterol levels. They also contain fiber, which can help lower cholesterol and fight constipation. They're convenient to take on the go and offer a satisfying crunch.

INSTEAD OF: WHITE
DINNER
ROLLS OR PASTA



TRY: WHOLE GRAIN
BREADS AND PASTA



White "refined" breads and pastas have much of the natural nutrients stripped out during processing. They usually have little to no fiber. This means they don't help you feel full and they can cause a drop in blood sugar a short time after they are eaten.

Instead of white pasta and bread, try a whole grain option. Whole wheat pasta, quinoa and brown rice contain fiber, nutrients and even protein that's great for your heart. Eating whole grains instead of refined grains may lower the risk of heart attack, stroke and obesity.

INSTEAD OF:
CHEESY
PASTA OR
SANDWICHES



TRY: AVOCADO
SLICED OR SPREAD



Cheese can be eaten in moderation as part of a healthy diet. But many processed cheeses contain saturated fat, salt and artificial ingredients.

Instead of processed cheese, try creamy avocado. Diced avocado pairs well with cherry tomatoes and herbs as a pasta topping. Try ripe avocado on a sandwich in place of sliced cheese. Avocado contains monounsaturated fats, which are heart health superstars. It also has antioxidants to help fight heart disease.

INSTEAD OF:
LUNCH
MEAT SANDWICHES



TRY: HUMMUS AND
VEGETABLE WRAPS



Most deli meats contain a large amount of salt. A diet high in salt can lead to high blood pressure, which increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. They may also contain saturated fat, which may raise the risk of heart problems.

Skip the meat and try a plant-based sandwich that still offers protein without the extra salt and unhealthy fat. Almond butter and peanut butter taste great on whole grain bread. Hummus offers protein and fiber, and pairs well with vegetables on whole grain wrap bread.

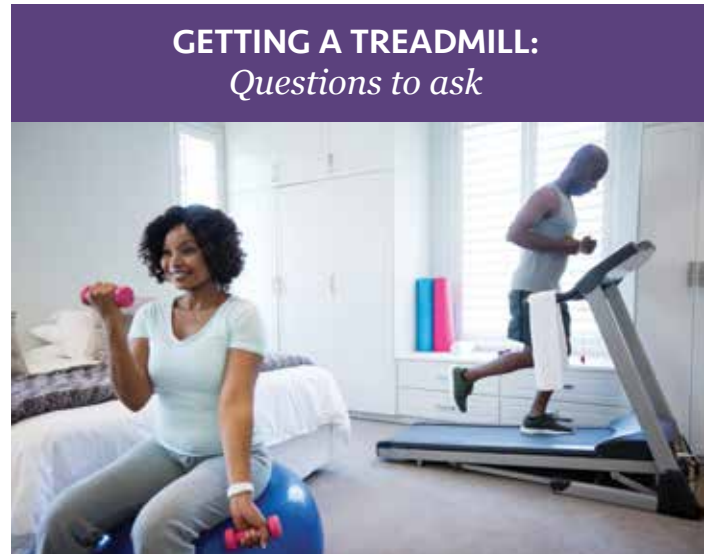
How walking can change your life

Many people don't exercise because they believe it takes too much time or money. They may think they need to spend an hour at the gym each day to get healthier. These myths could be standing in the way of a healthier life.

Exercise is a universal way to improve health. We know that physical activity can reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes and even cancer. It also boosts energy levels and can help you sleep better. But there's another benefit to exercise that many people may not know about: **better mental health.**

If you are thinking about being more active, a walking program is a tried and true favorite form of physical activity. As an exercise, walking is easy to begin and maintain. Plus, it needs no special skills or expensive equipment, and can be done year-round, outdoors and indoors.

For those who thought they didn't have time to walk or exercise, there's good health news. Even a small amount of exercise can help you feel better mentally by reducing feelings of depression and anxiety, and improving cognition.



GETTING A TREADMILL: *Questions to ask*

Treadmills have been a mainstay in gyms for years. Many people also get one for their homes. They're simple to use and can adjust to your fitness level. But should you buy one? Here's what to consider:

How much money do you want to spend?

A new treadmill can cost hundreds — or even thousands — of dollars. But many people can get used treadmills for a fraction of the cost. If you buy a used one, make sure to test it first to be sure it works. Ask the seller if they have the instruction manual.

Can you do other indoor exercise?

You don't need a treadmill to get a good workout inside. You can turn on music and dance or use a fitness video or interactive game. Consider how many days per year you would need the treadmill because of bad weather. Then, weigh that against the cost.

Will it "work" for you?

Do your research before making the investment. Check out online reviews of the exact treadmill you're considering. Find out if it's good for running, walking or both. Will it work with your height? Taller people often need a longer treadmill belt.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

