



Date: Feb. 20, 2012

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## Are You Living a Heart Healthy Life?

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Did you know that heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States? What are you doing to live a heart healthy life?

Diet is a major component of living a heart healthy life. In fact, the food you eat can affect the way blood flows through your heart and arteries.

“The food you eat affects your heart by the influences it has on cardiac risk factors including cholesterol, blood pressure and weight,” said Ryan Kauffman, M.D., a family physician from Bellefontaine, Ohio.

The right diet can help keep your arteries clear and will reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. By making smart and healthy food choices, you are well on your way to keeping your heart healthy.

“A heart healthy diet should include plenty of fruits and vegetables and whole grains. You should limit saturated fats and high cholesterol foods, alcohol, and salt,” said Kauffman.

Your weight also plays a part in your ability to be heart healthy. It is important for you to consult your family physician about your ideal weight, because every person is different.

“Being overweight increases your risk of developing heart disease, but by losing 10 percent of your body weight, you can significantly reduce your chance of having a heart attack,” explained Kauffman.

One of the simplest ways to control your body weight is to exercise consistently. Exercise makes your heart stronger, which helps it pump more blood with each heartbeat. Knowing what kind of exercise and how much exercise to do on a weekly basis is up to you and your family physician.

Kauffman explained that, “for adults less than age 65 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise like brisk walking or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity such as jogging or running and muscle strengthening exercises at least two days a week.”

Living a heart healthy life is not as hard you might think!

*The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with more than 4,100 members, including practicing physicians, family medicine residents and medical students. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages, both sexes and every disease entity. Family physicians provide comprehensive, continuing care to all members of the family.*



## FACT SHEET

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#### Tips for a heart healthy diet

- Eat less saturated and Trans fats. These fats are found in foods such as butter, coconut and palm oil, saturated or hydrogenated vegetable fats such as Crisco, animal fats in meats, and fats in whole milk dairy products.
- Whole grain breads are high in fiber and complex carbohydrates, so choose these breads instead of white breads for sandwiches and as additions to meals.
- Eat fruits and vegetables, which are naturally low in fat. Not only do they add flavor and variety to your diet, but they also contain fiber, vitamins and minerals.
- Baking, broiling and roasting are the healthiest ways to prepare meat and poultry. Trim any outside fat or skin before cooking. Lean cuts can be pan broiled or stir fried. Use either a nonstick pan or nonstick cooking spray instead of butter or margarine.
- Dry beans, peas and lentils offer protein and fiber without the cholesterol and fat that meats have. Once in a while, try substituting beans for meat in a favorite recipe, such as lasagna or chili.
- Choose low or nonfat versions of milk, yogurt and cheese products. Eat no more than four egg yolks a week (use egg whites or egg substitutes).

#### How will I fit exercise into my busy schedule?

There are lots of ways to raise your heart rate during your regular day. Some examples include:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk during a coffee break or lunch.
- Walk to work or park at the end of the parking lot so you have to walk farther.
- Walk more briskly.
- Do housework at a quicker pace and more often (for example, vacuuming every day).
- Rake leaves, push the lawn mower or do other yard work.

Sources: [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)