

Be one in a million hearts



ABCSs



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What is Million Hearts[®]?

Million Hearts is a national initiative to improve the heart health of Americans and save lives.



The goal of the Million Hearts Initiative is to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by the year 2017. The initiative hopes to accomplish this by focusing, coordinating, and activating the public to practice preventative cardiovascular lifestyles.

Each year, heart disease kills roughly the same number of people in the United States as cancer, lower respiratory infections, and accidents combined. Together, we can make a difference.



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Aspirin therapy for high-risk individuals

If you've had a heart attack or stroke, chances are your doctor or nurse practitioner has talked to you about taking aspirin to prevent a second heart attack or stroke.

If you have strong risk factors, but have not had a heart attack or stroke, you may also benefit from taking an aspirin every day. But first, you'll want to discuss with your doctor or nurse practitioner whether you have any conditions that make taking aspirin dangerous for you.

Actions for your aspirin therapy

There's no uniform dose of aspirin you should take to get the benefits of daily aspirin therapy. You and your doctor or nurse practitioner will discuss what dose is right for you. Very low doses of aspirin—75 milligrams (mg), which is less than a standard baby aspirin—can be effective. Your doctor or nurse practitioner may prescribe a daily dose anywhere from 81 mg—the amount in a baby aspirin—to 325 mg (regular strength).



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Blood pressure control

Approximately 68 million US adults have high blood pressure. High blood pressure puts an extra strain on your body—especially your heart, blood vessels, and kidneys. It increases your risk of stroke, heart attack, kidney disease, and heart disease.

When high blood pressure exists with being overweight, smoking, high blood cholesterol levels, or diabetes, the risk of heart attack or stroke increases substantially.

Systolic blood pressure is the first or top number of your blood pressure. Diastolic blood pressure is the second or bottom number of your blood pressure. For example, if your blood pressure is 117/76, then your systolic blood pressure is 117 and your diastolic reading is 76.

Actions to reduce your blood pressure

You can help lower your blood pressure by:

- Losing weight
- Increasing physical activity
- Limiting your salt intake
- Limiting the amount of alcohol you drink
- Stopping smoking
- Taking medication, if prescribed by your doctor or nurse practitioner



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Cholesterol management

Approximately 71 million US adults have high cholesterol. Your body makes cholesterol, but you can also get cholesterol from your diet. There are different types of cholesterol – some are healthy and some lead to heart disease. The higher your bad cholesterol levels, the greater your risk for acquiring heart disease. Cholesterol causes fatty deposits (plaque) to build up in your arteries and narrow them.

For HDL (good cholesterol), the higher the number is, the lower your risk of heart disease. HDL cholesterol protects you against heart disease. It helps to prevent fatty deposits from building up in your arteries. The higher your HDL cholesterol, the better.

Non-HDL cholesterol is a measure of all of the unhealthy types of cholesterol that cause plaque to build up and narrow your arteries. Over time, this plaque build-up can reduce blood flow to the heart and brain, putting you at a higher risk for heart attack and stroke. A lower non-HDL level is better for heart health.

Actions to manage your cholesterol

Lowering your blood cholesterol usually means changing your eating habits, losing weight, and taking medications. You may be able to increase your good cholesterol (HDL) with regular exercise. If your doctor or nurse practitioner decides that you are at especially high risk, he or she may recommend lowering your blood cholesterol through medication.



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Smoking cessation

Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease for both men and women. Smokers' risk of developing heart disease is two to four times that of nonsmokers. The good news is that in the year after you quit smoking, your risk of future heart problems drops by 50 percent. After 15 years, your risk is as low as someone who has never smoked.

Actions to stop smoking

Giving up smoking isn't easy. But just one change—from smoker to nonsmoker—can make a big difference to your future health. The good news is, it's never too late to quit.

The key to quitting smoking is being motivated, getting the support you need, being aware of your smoking triggers, and discovering your reasons for quitting. Options for quitting can include counseling and medications. Consult your doctor or nurse practitioner for the option(s) that work for you.

You can start getting help today. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit smokefree.gov.



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Stress reduction*

Chronic stress exposes your body to unhealthy, persistently elevated levels of stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol. Studies also link stress to changes in the way blood clots, which increases the risk of heart attack.

There are many healthy ways to manage and cope with stress, but they all require change. You can't always change the situation causing you stress, but you can always work on changing your reaction to the situation. Since everyone has a unique response to stress, there is no "one size fits all" solution to managing it. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different techniques and strategies. Focus on what makes you feel calm and in control. Find two or three strategies that you like and practice them daily.

Actions to reduce your stress

- Go for a walk
- Spend time in nature
- Call a good friend
- Sweat out tension with a good workout
- Write in your journal
- Play with a pet
- Work in your garden
- Get a massage
- Curl up with a good book
- Listen to music
- Watch a comedy
- Take a long bath
- Take a few deep breaths

**This additional "s" was added by The Ohio State University*



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What can I do?

- Understand your risks.
- Know your ABCSs.
- Take the Million Hearts® pledge today at millionhearts.hhs.gov.
- Commit to changing just one thing today for your health.



Million Hearts® at Ohio State: millionhearts.osu.edu

National Million Hearts® Initiative: millionhearts.hhs.gov

The Ohio State University College of Nursing: nursing.osu.edu



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Partners:

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