



HEART DISEASE PREVALENCE & SCREENING .

BY JILL REITSMA

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for both men and women in the United States, claiming more lives than all forms of cancer combined. Healthcare and wellness professionals always stress the importance of living a healthy lifestyle, but how seriously do people take that advice?

When life gets in the way and other activities and people take priority, it's easy to forget what the doctor said. Heart disease can be easily avoided by participating in a healthy lifestyle, like your doctor recommends. The key to preventing heart disease is managing your risk factors by getting the following recommended screenings for ideal cardiovascular health:

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol and triglycerides
- Body weight
- Blood glucose
- Smoking, physical activity, and diet

Regular screenings are important because they can help find risk factors at an early stage. And for many patients, the results are motivation to make a positive lifestyle change.

Sources: American Heart Association. heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Heart-Health-Screenings_UCM_428687_Article.jsp#.WFqDKIMrQJ. Accessed 21 December 2016.
The Heart Foundation. theheartfoundation.org/heart-disease-facts/heart-disease-statistics. Accessed 21 December 2016.

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Smart Facts

50%

is the risk decrease of a heart attack one year after a smoker quits.

90%

of the risks associated with heart disease are within your control, like physical activity and diet.

10 MINUTES

a day of brisk exercise reduces risk of heart attack by nearly 50%.

Source: Wellcast. wellcast.org/10-interesting-facts-about-heart-disease. Accessed 22 December 2016.



SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT CHOLESTEROL & BLOOD PRESSURE .

BY RACHEL SAVIEO

February is heart health month, so there is no better time to brush up on your knowledge about cholesterol and blood pressure. Both are important to overall health, and the lifestyle choices you make every day influence them significantly. Here are a few lesser known facts about cholesterol that may surprise you:

- **You must have cholesterol to survive and one type of cholesterol is good for you.** Cholesterol is a building block for all the body's cells. High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is the type of cholesterol that helps clear your blood vessels of the unhealthy types of cholesterol (LDL and triglycerides) that can clog your arteries and lead to heart disease. You can raise your HDL levels through exercise and by eating a healthy diet with good fats.
- **High cholesterol is common in the U.S., affecting 1 out of every 3 adults.** About 32% of U.S. adults have high LDL levels that put them at a higher risk for heart disease. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that all adults over age 20 have their cholesterol checked every five years.
- **High cholesterol may be genetic.** About 1 in 200 people have an inherited condition called familial hypercholesterolemia (FH). FH makes it hard for your body to get rid of extra cholesterol from meat, fish, and dairy. You may have FH if you have a family history of high cholesterol or heart attacks before age 50. Be sure to talk to your doctor about your risk if you fall in to those categories.



The Center for Disease Control recommends that all adults over the age of 20 have their cholesterol checked every five years.

Blood pressure is also important to track for your overall health. High blood pressure is often known as the “silent killer” because it has no symptoms and raises the risk for the two leading causes of death in the United States, heart disease and stroke. The good news is that high blood pressure is both preventable and treatable (with diet, exercise, and medication, if needed). Here are a couple less known facts about blood pressure:

- **High blood pressure may be linked to dementia.** Recent studies suggest that uncontrolled blood pressure from age 45-65 creates a higher risk for dementia later in life.
- **Even if you are in your 30s or 40s, high blood pressure may affect you.** About 1 in 4 men and 1 in 5 women ages 35-44 has high blood pressure according to the CDC. No matter your age, you should have your blood pressure checked at least once a year.

Being aware of your cholesterol and blood pressure numbers and keeping them in a healthy range can help you lead a longer, healthier life. It's never too early to talk to your doctor about these numbers and take steps to manage them.

Sources: Everyday Health. everydayhealth.com/high-cholesterol/symptoms/things-you-didnt-know-about-cholesterol. Accessed 20 December 2016.
WebMD. webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/5-misconceptions-about-hypertension#1. Accessed 20 December 2016.
Center for Disease Control. cdc.gov/features/highbloodpressure. Accessed 20 December 2016.

AVOID A WINTER OF DISCONTENT .

BY JOHN THOMAS

Between colds and flus and slips and falls, the colder months wreak havoc on the human body. Here are a few tips for staying healthy and safe until the thaw.

Stay healthy. Small precautions make a big difference.

- Keep the bugs away: Wash your hands at every opportunity; avoid touching your eyes, nose, and lips; and get a flu shot.
- Hydrate: Drink plenty of fluids, but also consider giving your nose a shot of saline a few times a day.
- Live healthy: Exercise, get plenty of sleep, eat fruits and veggies, and limit your alcohol intake.
- Breathe easy: Use a humidifier whenever possible and avoid smokers.

Stay safe. Protect your body when you're out in the elements.

- Look sharp: Pay attention to where you step, watching out for icy spots, pot holes, and other winter hazards.
- Stay upright: Wear sensible shoes. If you have to walk on ice, take small steps.
- Fall well: If you do fall, try to turn sideways and land on your thigh, hip, and shoulder. Do your best to relax, and don't catch yourself with your hands or let your head hit the ground.
- Shovel smart: When shoveling, use your legs, not your back. Don't try to lift heavy piles of wet snow.
- Warm up: Cold muscles strain more easily. Warm up before shoveling or playing in the snow.
- Drive with care: Leave extra room in front of you. Take your time and be aware of the traffic around you.

The best tip of all? Whether you get the sniffles or take a tumble, see your doctor as soon as possible. Catching a problem early can help you get over it sooner.



February 3 is National Wear Red Day

In 2003, the American Heart Association and National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute acted against a disease that was claiming the lives of thousands of women each year – heart disease. From this action stemmed National Wear Red Day. It is held on the first Friday of every February to raise awareness about heart disease being the number one killer of women. This year, National Wear Red Day is on February 3. Make sure to dress in red!

Source: goredforwomen.org/get-involved/national-wear-red-day/national-wear-red-day. Accessed 12 December 2016.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: AVOCADOS

BY KELLY THOMSON, MSHP

Avocados have certainly gained popularity in recent years. Not only are they delicious, but they contain many vitamins and minerals, including potassium, fiber, and vitamins B, C, E, and K. They are also high in healthy monounsaturated fat and low in sugar. You can often find avocados in guacamole, on salads, and in different kinds of wraps and sandwiches.

How to Select

A ripe avocado that is ready to eat will be slightly soft, but should not have cracks or bruises. If you do not intend to eat the fruit in the next day or two, it is best to purchase firm avocados so they do not overripen.

How to Store

You may store your underripe, firm avocados in a paper bag or fruit basket at room temperature. Once the outside skin is dark and yields to gentle pressure, it is ready to be eaten or refrigerated. You should only refrigerate ripe avocados, which helps keep the avocado from overripening for up to a week.



How to Prepare

Wash the skin before cutting to reduce bacteria. Cut the avocado lengthwise around the pit. Once it is cut into two halves, remove the pit using a spoon. You may then either peel the skin or scoop out the avocado flesh with your spoon. Then slice, mash, or cube the avocado and enjoy.

Sources: WebMD. webmd.com/food-recipes/all-about-avocados. Accessed 3 January 2017.
WHFoods. whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=5. Accessed 3 January 2017.



Recipe: Turkey & Avocado Wraps

Ingredients (makes 4 servings):

- ½ avocado
- 2 tsp plain fat-free Greek yogurt
- 4 large low-carb tortillas
- 12 oz low-sodium deli-style turkey breast
- 4 tsp sunflower seeds
- 1 tomato, sliced
- 1 cup shredded lettuce

Directions:

1. In a small bowl, mix together avocado and Greek yogurt.
2. Spread avocado mixture evenly onto four tortillas.
3. Top each tortilla with 3 ounces turkey, 1 teaspoon sunflower seeds, 2 slices tomato and ¼ cup lettuce.
4. Roll wraps and slice in half.

Nutrition Information:

PER SERVING: 245 calories, 24g carbohydrates, 32g protein, 8g fat, 1g saturated fat, 4g sugar, 14g fiber, 55mg cholesterol, 385mg sodium, 510mg potassium

Source: Diabetes.org. diabetes.org/mfa-recipes/recipes/2013-04-turkey-and-avocado-wrap.html. Accessed 3 January 2017.