

# Homework Help – Heart Disease & Stroke

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## Preventing Heart Disease & Stroke

### What causes heart disease and stroke?

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- diabetes
- smoking
- stress
- drinking too much alcohol
- not being physically active
- being overweight

### How can you prevent heart disease and stroke?

There are lots of things you can do right now to stay healthy and prevent heart disease and stroke. Here are some examples:

#### 1. Eat a variety of healthy foods every day

Healthy eating involves eating a variety of foods from the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide [\[link\]](#) in the required amounts.

There are lots of benefits to eating healthy foods:

- growth
- healthy teeth and bones
- plenty of energy
- healthy body weight
- overall good health
- feeling good about yourself

Healthy eating is good for you. Nutritious food provides the vitamins and minerals you need to have a healthy body. Eating a wide variety of foods from the four food groups will help all parts of your body grow and function well.

It's interesting to look at your own eating habits. Try keeping a "Food Diary" for a day [\[see below\]](#).

#### 2. Breathe clean air – don't smoke!

When you breathe, your lungs bring air into your body. Air contains oxygen which is needed to get energy out of the food you eat. All of the cells in your body use this energy to function.

Smoking (or breathing second-hand smoke) is bad for your health because you reduce the amount of oxygen in your blood when you smoke. This forces your heart to work harder.

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Smoking also thickens the walls in your arteries, making it hard for blood to pass through. It also increases the risk of blood clots – one of the major causes of heart attacks and strokes - and makes your blood pressure high.

## 3. Be physically active every day

Your heart is made of muscle and muscle gets strong when it works harder. A strong heart is important because it can pump blood efficiently – it doesn't have to beat as often to move blood through your body. If your heart muscle is weak, it can't deliver blood quickly and you could have a heart attack. You can make your heart strong by being physically active often.

There are lots of other benefits to active living:

- more energy
- stronger muscles and bones
- better posture and balance
- feeling good about yourself
- healthy body weight
- helps you sleep better
- manages stress
- it's fun!

Activities that are good for your heart should provide constant movement to make the heart beat faster. Children and youths should be active 90 minutes most days of the week. Don't panic - you don't have to do it all at once! You can build up activities throughout the day in periods of 5-10 minutes. Walking quickly, non-stop dancing, running, skipping, and biking are some examples. Can you think of more?

It's interesting to look at your own activities. Try keeping an "Active Living Log" for a day (see below).

## Are there other ways to prevent heart disease and stroke?

There sure are! Here are additional ways people can protect themselves from heart disease and stroke:

- Know what their blood pressure is and control it so it doesn't get too high
- Manage diabetes
- Don't drink too much alcohol
- Reduce stress
- Visit their doctor regularly and follow their doctor's advice

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## Are there factors we can't control?

- **Age:** As you get older, your risk of heart disease and stroke increases.
- **Gender:** Men have a greater risk of heart disease and stroke than women.
- **Family history:** If you have close family members with heart disease (a parent, brother or sister), there's a chance that you will too. Your risk of stroke is increased if close family members had a stroke before they were 65 years old.
- **Ethnicity:** First Nations people and those of African or South Asian descent are more likely to have high blood pressure and diabetes. These are risk factors for heart disease and stroke which makes them at greater risk than the general population.

Even though you can't control these risks, there's plenty you can do to stay healthy! Remember to eat healthy foods! Be physically active! Don't smoke!

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## Your Food Diary

### Are you getting the right amount of the right food?

List exactly what you ate for breakfast, lunch and dinner and don't forget snacks. Use Canada's Food Guide [link] to help you divide your food intake into the four food groups and the "Other Foods" category. If you ate more than 1 serving of a particular food, list the number of servings beside the food.

Compare your results to the range of servings that boys and girls (age 2-13) need from each food group:

- 3-4 grain products (bread, rice, cereal, pasta)
- 4-6 vegetables and fruit (juice, fresh, frozen or canned fruit and vegetables)
- 2-4 milk products (milk, cheese, soy drinks, yogurt)
- 1-2 meat products (chicken, fish, beans, eggs, tofu, peanut butter, nuts and seeds)
- Don't forget to include the 'other' foods

*These amounts change. When you get older you need more servings. Around the age 14, males need more servings than females.*

	Grain products	Vegetables and fruit	Milk products	Meat & alternatives	Other foods
Breakfast					
Snack					
Lunch					
Snack					
Dinner					
Snack					

Having the amount and type of food recommended will help you:

- Get vitamins, minerals and other nutrients your body needs
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Reduce your risk of getting diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer

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## Active Living Log

Are you getting 90 minutes of physical activity most days of the week? Write down all of the different activities you do each day and see how they add up. Remember, every 10 minutes of physical activity you do is good for your health!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Can you think of other ways to increase your physical activity.....