



LiveHealthy

February 2015

Your Heart Health

Your heart is a muscle that, just like the engine of a car, keeps your body running. Made up of two pumps, it is engineered to send oxygenated blood through your body and back to your lungs to refill oxygen levels. Also just like an engine, your heart needs to be maintained so it can perform at its best. Here are some tips on how to keep your heart in top shape:

Keep Cholesterol Levels in Check

Cholesterol is a type of essential fat in your blood. However, our bodies produce all of the cholesterol we need on their own, so adding additional cholesterol to your diet — typically found in animal products — is not necessary. Eating too many fatty foods can raise your blood cholesterol to unhealthy levels, causing plaque to build up in your arteries which in turn increases your blood pressure.

But all cholesterol is not created equal. When we think of cholesterol, we usually think of it as unhealthy. What we're actually referring to, though, is LDL, or low-density lipoprotein, the "bad" cholesterol. High-density lipoprotein, known as HDL, is very good for our heart health. It helps to break down the LDL in the blood and can prevent heart attack and stroke. Staying active and losing excess weight can go a long way in boosting your HDL levels.

Manage Blood Pressure

Blood pressure measures the force on the walls of your arteries with each heartbeat. High blood pressure can lead to problems with your heart, eyes, and kidneys — and even cause a stroke. Exercise and reducing salt in your diet can help, but you may need medication to manage high blood pressure and prevent its related problems. It is important to have your blood pressure checked regularly, even if you are healthy.

Healthways™ Fitness Your Way

Healthways Fitness Your Way is a first-of-its-kind fitness program that offers you the flexibility of an affordable workout, at any of our 9,000+ network fitness locations!

This month, commit to a healthy lifestyle without the \$25 enrollment fee when you register through Blue365@!

1. Log in or register on Blue365Deals.com
2. Select Healthways Fitness Your Way under Fitness
3. Select Redeem Now and wait to be directed to the Healthways landing page
4. Waive your enrollment fee by entering code **FEBFIT** at checkout

You can also enroll with this code by calling our dedicated customer service team at **888.242.2060**, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.—9 p.m.

Hurry! This offer is only good through February 28th, 2015!

The Blue365 program is brought to you by the BlueCross BlueShield Association. The BlueCross BlueShield Association is an association of independent, locally operated BlueCross and/or BlueShield Companies. Blue365 offers access to savings on health and wellness products and services and other interesting items that members may purchase from independent vendors, which are different from covered benefits under your policies with Capital BlueCross and its family of companies. Healthways is a national vendor that provides solutions to improve health and well-being. On behalf of Capital BlueCross, Healthways Wholehealth Network, Inc. assists in the administration of fitness programs. Healthways is an independent company.

Watch for Signs of Heart Disease

There are many different kinds of heart disease. The most common is atherosclerosis, otherwise known as hardening of the arteries. This buildup of plaque on your arterial walls reduces the flow of oxygen and blood to the rest of your body, often leading to leg pain, heart attack, and stroke. Atherosclerosis is not part of normal aging and can be serious. To prevent or delay atherosclerosis or other heart disease, you can:

- Quit or avoid smoking
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Avoid sitting down for long stretches each day
- Exercise and eat a healthy diet
- Control diabetes, high blood pressure, and/or high cholesterol
- Manage your stress
- Limit your alcohol consumption

Questions for Your Doctor

1. What is my risk for heart disease?
2. What are my blood pressure and cholesterol numbers?
3. What are my BMI and waist measurements? Do they indicate that I need to lose or gain weight to improve my health?
4. What is my blood sugar level? Am I at risk for diabetes?
5. What other screening tests do I need to help protect my heart?
6. What can you do to help me quit smoking?
7. How much physical activity do I need to help protect my heart?
8. What's a heart-healthy eating plan for me?
9. How can I tell if I'm having a heart attack? What do I do?

- Courtesy of NIH.gov

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Recipe Row

Black Bean Salad

Beans are known for their heart-healthy properties. Unlike animal proteins, they are naturally low in fat and free of cholesterol, and can help manage your blood sugar.

A 2014 report in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* found that one daily serving of legumes has the power to reduce your LDL, or “bad” cholesterol, by five percent.

Ingredients (serves 4):

- 1 cup butternut squash, cubed
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 15 oz. can black beans
- 2 tbsp. raw pumpkin seeds
- 8 tbsp. ginger vinaigrette

Directions:

Steam squash for three minutes. Add broccoli and continue steaming approx. four minutes. Transfer to a colander and rinse under cold water. Drain and place in mixing bowl. Toss in beans and dressing.

In a dry skillet on medium heat, toast pumpkin seeds until they crackle, about three minutes. Add to salad and toss.

See more recipes and share your own tips for living healthy at capitalbluestore.com/blog.

Capital Blue is brought to you by Capital BlueCross.

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