



February is
National Heart Health Month.

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Eat for a healthy heart

A heart-healthy diet doesn't have to start with the word "no," as in no fat, no salt or no fun.

A diet that is good for your cardiovascular health and your waistline can still include some of your favorite foods.

Nutritionists say that for a diet to be heart healthy, it should be well-balanced and include foods from the basic four - fruits and vegetables, meats (leaner is better), dairy (try low-fat) and whole grains.

It is always a good idea to talk to your doctor about your specific dietary needs and to learn the best way to improve your diet.

Not all fats are bad

Too much saturated fat in the diet can raise the level of cholesterol in your blood and thus speed the development of arteriosclerosis, the build up of fatty deposits in the inner walls of your arteries. Eating too little or no fat, however, may also be harmful. That's because certain vitamins such as A, D, E and K can only be absorbed by the body when fat is present.

All fats are not created equal and certain ones provide more benefit than others. There is some evidence, for example, that monounsaturated fats may raise the body's HDL cholesterol, the "good" cholesterol that protects against heart disease.

Olive oil, which is rich in a monounsaturated fat, also contains small amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, which have been found to be beneficial to the heart. Fish, nut and seed oils also contain omega-3 fatty acids.

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Healthy eating guidelines

- **Consider cooking techniques, not just types of foods.** Try sautéing, grilling, roasting, broiling or braising in broth instead of frying.
- **Be wary of foods that use hydrogenated oils that contain trans fats.** Trans fats are worse than saturated fats in terms of their effect on blood cholesterol. Read the nutrition labels to make sure the foods you are eating contain little to no trans fat.
- **Limit total cholesterol to less than 300 milligrams per day.** Like saturated fat, cholesterol is present in all foods from animal sources, such as meat, fish and poultry, as well as dairy products.
- **Eat more fiber.** Experts suggest 25 grams to 35 grams a day. The soluble and insoluble have different effects. Soluble fiber (found in fruits and oats) lowers cholesterol, and insoluble (dried fruits and fruits with seeds such as raspberries) speed things through the digestive tract.
- **Eat "natural" foods.** The closer you get to the original whole state with less processing, the better off you are.
- **Cut back on sodium.** Limit sodium intake to no more than 2,400 milligrams (2.4 grams) per day. Reducing the amount of sodium you take in can ease your heart's workload.

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Reducing the amount of sodium you take in can ease your heart's workload.

Tips to reduce sodium

- Don't salt food at the table and don't add salt when you cook.
- Choose fresh foods and prepare them yourself without added salt. Fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh lean meats, beans and eggs are naturally low in sodium.
- When using canned beans or vegetables, rinse and drain them to remove extra sodium.
- Look for prepared foods labeled "salt-free," "low sodium" or "low salt." Still, always check to see how much sodium is in a serving.
- Get a low-salt cookbook and try out different ways to make your favorite dishes. To add flavor, experiment with salt-free options such as herbs, pepper, garlic, lemon juice or vinegar.
- Ask your doctor or dietitian if you can use a salt substitute (ones that are high in potassium may not be safe for you).
- Avoid high-sodium foods. Some examples of high-sodium foods are:
 - Seasonings such as soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, bouillon, cooking sherry, steak sauce, ketchup and barbecue sauce
 - Processed foods such as canned soups, frozen pizza, tomato sauce, canned beans and pot pies
 - Processed meats such as lunch meats, sausage, hot dogs, bacon and cured ham
 - Snack foods such as crackers, chips, salted nuts, pretzels, olives and popcorn
 - Most fast foods



Some studies have linked high levels of anger – not just occasional outbursts - with heart problems.

Anger can harm your heart

According to the American Psychological Association, anger can cause high blood pressure and depression. Some studies have linked high levels of anger - not just occasional outbursts - with heart problems. These include abnormal heart rhythm (atrial fibrillation) and coronary heart disease.

A study at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine looked at anger and stress. It showed that men were three times more likely than women to develop premature heart disease if they reacted to stress with anger. The evidence suggests that anger causes the arteries to narrow, which makes the heart work harder to pump blood.

Regain control

Learning to express anger without losing control may lower your risk for certain types of heart problems. It may also help improve your personal relationships. Many of us just don't handle anger well. Perhaps no one taught us how. The good news is that it's never too late to learn. These guidelines may help:

- **Communicate.** When you're angry, listen carefully to what the other person is really trying to say. Don't jump to react to the words themselves. Count to ten first. It'll give you time to think about what you're going to say.
- **Relax.** Breathe deeply and slowly while repeating calming words. Close your eyes and remember a relaxing experience. Make one up if it helps. If you're often on edge, sign up for a local yoga class. You may find that the movements are soothing.
- **Be logical.** Take a step back from the situation to gain perspective. Is such a strong reaction justified? Getting angry won't help you find a solution or feel better. Remind yourself that frustration is part of daily life.
- **Problem-solve.** Turn your energy toward finding a solution instead of lashing out. Keep in mind that you may not be able to fix all your problems. Is the situation beyond your control? If so, try to move on instead of dwelling on it.
- **Know yourself.** Get to know what triggers your anger. Once you know what sets you off, you can avoid it. For example, if driving in traffic leaves you seething, find a new route to work or take public transportation.



UnitedHealthcare provides many resources free of charge to help you get and stay healthy.

UnitedHealthcare Resources

Want to learn about keeping your heart healthy or need help managing a heart related condition?

UnitedHealthcare provides many resources free of charge to help you get and stay healthy.

Wellness Coaches – We have wellness coaches available to help you achieve lifestyle changes that can lead to a healthy heart. You can interact with a coach online, over the phone or through the mail – whatever is most convenient for you. Call the Customer Care number on the back of your medical ID card for more information.

Care Coordination – If you currently have a heart condition, you may be assigned a nurse to work with you on an ongoing basis. Your personal nurse helps make sure that you are getting the appropriate care. Call the Customer Care number on the back of your medical ID card for more information.

NurseLineSM – Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nurses can help answer your medical-related questions. Whether you need help finding a cardiologist or an explanation about a certain procedure, a nurse can help. Call 1-866-696-5846 anytime you need it.

Online tools – Also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, you can access a wealth of information on myuhc.com[®]. You can use the encyclopedia to look up medical terms and different conditions. Search for providers in your area, chat live with a nurse, find heart healthy recipes, or use the blood pressure tracking tool.



**Nurseline:
866-696-5846**

Looking for ways to **save** money?

Make sure you get the appropriate treatment of care. Trips to the emergency room for colds and flu cost you a lot more than a visit to an urgent care center or convenient care clinic.

Not sure what type of treatment is best? Call NurseLineSM. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nurses can help you make smart health care decisions. One toll free number connects you with a registered nurse who can assist you and your family with a wide range of health care questions and concerns.

NurseLine nurses are an excellent resource when you need help choosing care, managing a chronic condition, understanding treatment options and more.

“My baby has a temperature of 102 degrees. It’s midnight. What do I do?”

“I have diabetes and my blood sugar is really high. How can I better manage my condition and stay healthy?”

“My child was just diagnosed with asthma. Where can I find information and resources? Is there a doctor in my area that specializes in asthma?”

	Free NurseLine	\$ Convenient clinic <small>(located in some pharmacies)</small>	\$ Physician services	\$\$ Urgent care	\$\$\$ Emergency room
Availability	Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week	Available extended hours & weekends	Generally available during normal business hours	Available extended hours & weekends	Available extended hours & weekends
Service Example	First aid, determining best treatment option, health education, provider search	Colds, flu, quick services	Preventive services, management of acute and chronic conditions	Sprains, strains, sutures	Complex-chest pain, trauma

Please visit

www.dch.georgia.gov/shbp_plans

to view current issues of this publication.

Important contact information

Where to go when you want information

myuhc.com Personalized tools, information and answers for managing your health care. Log on anytime 24/7 to get important benefit, claim and health information on the Internet when it is convenient for you!

www.liveandworkwell.com An informative Web site with a behavioral health clinician directory, comprehensive health articles, tools and more.

NurseLine Services: 866-696-5846. Talk to a Registered Nurse 24 hours, seven days a week and access thousands of topics in the Health Information Library.

Care CoordinationSM Refer to the customer service phone number on the back of your ID card.

Definity HRA: 800-396-6515

PPO: 877-246-4189

Choice HMO: 866-527-9599

High-Deductible Health Plan: 877-246-4195

Retirees: 877-246-4190

For any claims or benefit-related questions or issues, please call the customer service number on the back of your card.

The Connection will be made available monthly at the myuhc.com site (www.myuhc.com/groups/gdch) and at www.dch.georgia.gov/shbp_plans to all State employees who are members of the UnitedHealthcare State of Georgia Health Benefit Plan.

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UnitedHealth WellnessSM is a collection of programs and services offered to UnitedHealthcare enrollees to help them stay healthy. It is not an insurance product but is offered to existing enrollees of certain products underwritten or provided by United HealthCare Insurance Company or its affiliates to encourage their participation in wellness programs. Health care professional availability for certain services may be dependent on licensure, scope of practice restrictions or other requirements in the state. Therefore, some services may not be included in some programs due to state regulations. Some UnitedHealth Wellness programs and services may not be included in all medical plans for all customers and individuals.

Insurance coverage provided by or through United HealthCare Insurance Company. Health Plan coverage provided by or through United HealthCare of Georgia, Inc.

Address updates

You could be missing out on important mailings.

For active employees, please complete and submit a Change and Miscellaneous Update form that is available online at www.dch.georgia.gov/shbp_plans. Forms should be completed and returned to your payroll location benefit manager.

For retired employees, please submit the following information:

- Name
- Subscriber number from your UnitedHealthcare ID card or Social Security number
 - Current address
 - New address
 - Telephone number
 - Signature authorizing the address change

Retirees mail to:

State Health Benefit Plan
P.O. Box 38342
Atlanta, GA 30334

