

4 Heart-Healthy Habits

Essential lifestyle changes for women



Imagine your heart as your phone screen. One slight crack on the screen would not be such an inconvenience. Multiple cracks and chipped edges, on the other hand, will have you running to the nearest gadget store for a new phone.

Unfortunately, unlike your phone, a fresh and healthy heart cannot be found in stores.

With that in mind, it is time to put a 'protector' over your heart by adjusting your lifestyle! Read on for four essential lifestyle changes to help you build a stronger heart.



#1

Educate yourself

Did you know that a heart attack manifests differently in women than in men?

Women who have had a heart attack may have the following symptoms:

- ♥ Pressure and pain in the centre of the chest, that come and go in waves, lasting a few minutes before returning.
- ♥ Pain in the stomach, jaw, neck, back and one or more arms.
- ♥ Breathing difficulties.
- ♥ Cold sweat.
- ♥ Unexplained dizziness & fatigue.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Take five minutes out of your busy schedule to read more about women and the symptoms of a heart attack. Only subscribe to articles backed by trustworthy sources. If at any time you're experiencing any of the symptoms, consult a doctor immediately.



#2

Eat a nutritious diet



A diet rich in fibre, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, as well as low in saturated and trans fats, can significantly reduce the risk of heart disease. If ever in doubt, just double-check with your healthcare provider to determine the healthiest meal options for you.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- ♥ **PLAN** - List your dietary goals and seek advice from a dietitian.
- ♥ **PICK** - Choose your favourite recipes and plan out your meals for the week.
- ♥ **PORTION** - In high quantities, even healthier meals can become unhealthy. Keep an eye on your portions.

#4

Don't worry, be happy

Aside from making physical health changes, keep in mind that the heart also operates the mind and soul. Well, just imagine, you wouldn't want to use a phone with full storage, would you?

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- ♥ Reduce stress. Identify relaxation strategies like yoga and meditation, as high levels of stress can cause heart disease.
- ♥ Quit smoking and minimise alcohol consumption. For some, this can be a tough journey. Do not give up, involve others and seek help whenever needed.



#3

Know your risk factors

Consult an expert if you have a family history of early heart disease or any of the following risk factors:

- ♥ High blood pressure.
- ♥ High cholesterol.
- ♥ Diabetes.
- ♥ Obesity.
- ♥ Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS).

Women with PCOS are especially vulnerable to cardiovascular problems. This is because women with PCOS are insulin resistant, which means that insulin can build up in the body, making normal blood glucose levels harder to manage. Diabetes is a potential risk factor of this. Excess insulin is also associated with weight gain and obesity.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Learn about your family's medical history. Then, speak with a healthcare specialist to establish your risk of developing heart disease. There is nothing to lose with a little family research.

These four lifestyle tweaks can help you gain a better understanding of your heart's health. We often say, "I can't live without my phone". Don't forget that your beating heart comes first! 💙

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Healthline, Very Well Health