University of Richmond Employee Wellness

Living with Heart Disease

Your lifestyle affects your health, especially if you have heart disease. The little things you do each day really make a difference.

Food and fitness matter. So do controlling stress and not smoking. And of course, you'll take your medicines and keep up with your doctor appointments and cardiac rehab.

Also, stay in touch with your mood. For many people, depression comes along with heart disease. If you notice that's true for you, reach out to your doctor for help in treating your depression.

It may feel like you're going through a lot of changes all at once. It's a good idea to seek help from dietitians, doctors, and support groups to keep you on track.

Some of the keys to making changes include:

- Have a plan before starting.

- Set realistic goals.
- Make one change at a time. For example, quit smoking before changing your diet.
- Write down your goal.
- Prepare for lapses and relapses. They happen. What matters more is that you get back on track.
- Reward yourself for your progress. Pick a reward that feels great and does not undermine your progress.
- Keep up with your friends and family. Your social connections are good for you!

Source: www.webmd.com
On December 28, 2015, the IRS extended the Affordable Care Act (ACA) reporting deadlines. Due to significant challenges, the newly required 1095-C tax form deadline has been extended, for reporting year 2015 only, from February 1, 2016 to March 31, 2016.

All University of Richmond employees who were offered benefits by the University of Richmond in 2015 will receive the 1095-C no later than March 31, 2016. If you file your personal tax returns (Form 1040s) before receiving a 1095-C from the University, you will most likely not need to amend your returns, but must keep it with your tax records. If you have specific questions about your tax filing, please consult a tax expert.

You may view the blank form on the IRS website (irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1095c.pdf). Visit the Human Resources website (hr.richmond.edu/benefits/affordable-care.html) for more information.

### Healthy Cooking: Slow-Cooker Chicken Cacciatore

**Ingredients**
- 1 Tbs. all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 c. Chianti or other dry red wine (regular or nonalcoholic)
- 1 1/2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, all visible fat discarded, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
- 8 oz. baby bella mushrooms, sliced (about 2 1/2 cups)
- 1 medium onion, halved, thinly sliced, and separated into half-rings
- 1/2 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 14.5-oz. can no-salt-added stewed tomatoes, undrained
- 1 14.5-oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 6-oz. can no-salt-added tomato paste
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbs. dried Italian seasoning, crumbled
- 2 Tbs. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 6 oz. dried whole grain spaghetti
- 2 Tbs. shredded or grated Parmesan cheese

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour and vinegar until the mixture forms a smooth paste. Gradually whisk in the wine. In a 3 1/2- or 4-quart slow cooker, stir together the remaining cacciatore ingredients. Stir in the wine mixture. Cook, covered, on high for 3 to 4 hours or on low for 7 to 8 hours. Shortly before serving time, prepare the pasta using the package directions, omitting the salt. Drain well in a colander. Spoon the pasta onto plates. Spoon the cacciatore over the pasta. Sprinkle with the Parmesan.

### Upcoming Months of Awareness

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10 Tips for Better Heart Health

By: Amanda MacMillan
WebMD Feature
Reviewed by James Beckerman, MD, FACC

Your heart works hard for you nonstop for your whole life. So show it some TLC. Making small changes in your habits can make a real difference in your heart health. "It's like finding the fountain of youth," says Donald Lloyd-Jones, MD, of Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. "People who follow these steps not only live longer, but they also spend a lot more time healthy, without cardiovascular disease." Even better? You don't have to work on all 10 steps at once. Even if you improve just one or two of these areas, you can make yourself less likely to get heart disease. Of course, the more tips on this list you can follow, the better. So let's get started.

1. Aim for lucky number seven.
The next time you're tempted to stay up later than you should, just think about how good that pillow will feel -- and how good a full night's sleep is for your heart. In one study, young and middle-aged adults who slept 7 hours a night had less calcium in their arteries (an early sign of heart disease) than those who slept 5 hours or less or those who slept 9 hours or more. The type of shut-eye they got was important, too: Adults who reported good-quality sleep also had healthier arteries than those who didn't sleep soundly. If you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep at night, or if you don't feel refreshed after a full night in bed, talk to your doctor about how healthier sleep habits might improve your slumber.

2. Keep the pressure off.
That cuff squeezing your arm at every doctor's visit is important. It measures the amount of pressure flowing through your arteries with every heartbeat. If your blood pressure gets too high, the extra force can damage artery walls and create scar tissue, making it more difficult for blood and oxygen to get to and from the heart. The heart has to pump harder and gets worn out faster. If it can't get enough oxygen, parts can start to die. Get your blood pressure checked at least once every 2 years, or more often if it is already high. Many people are able to keep their levels in the healthy range by following an eating plan such as the DASH Diet or the Mediterranean diet. Cut back on salt, limit alcohol to no more than one to two drinks a day, manage your stress, and get regular exercise, too. If these changes alone don't help, your doctor might recommend you also take medication.

3. Slash saturated fats.
Too much "bad" cholesterol can clog the heart and arteries with dangerous plaque. It mostly comes from saturated and trans fats, found in red meat, full-fat dairy products, and fried or processed foods. So cut back on these products and cut out trans fats completely (check ingredients lists for anything that says "hydrogenated" or "partially hydrogenated" -- those are trans fats). Adults should get a cholesterol blood test at least every 5 years. Your doctor should consider your other risk factors for heart disease when deciding what your goals should be.

4. Make a shift to avoid diabetes.
Over time, high blood sugar damages arteries and puts you at risk for heart disease. Your doctor should test your blood sugar if you are 45 or older, if you are pregnant, or if you're overweight and have other risk factors for diabetes. If you have diabetes, work with your doctor on your lifestyle (diet and exercise) and any medicine that you may need. If you have borderline high blood sugar, also called prediabetes, take action now to turn things around. One simple swap is to trade processed carbs (like white rice) for fiber-rich whole grains (like brown rice). In one study, that simple swap slashed diabetes risk by 36%.

5. Sit less and sweat more.
You should get at least 150 minutes a week (30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) of moderate exercise, meaning any activity that gets you moving around and breaking a slight sweat. But really, every little bit counts. "If you're doing nothing, do something -- and if you're doing something, do more," Lloyd-Jones says. Also, pay attention to how much time you spend seated, whether it's at work, in your car, or on your couch at home. "We now know that even if you exercise for 30 minutes a day, being sedentary for the other 23 and a half hours is really bad for your heart," says Monika Sanghavi, MD, assistant professor of cardiology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. That doesn't mean you have to quit your desk job or throw away your favorite recliner. Break up long periods of sitting, and choose to stand or walk while doing things like talking on the phone or watching TV.

6. Have more fruit and less fruit juice.
Your heart works best when it runs on clean fuel. That means lots of whole, plant-based foods (like fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds) and fewer refined or processed foods (like white bread, pasta, crackers, and cookies). It's time-tested wisdom. "The latest fads get overplayed by the media, but the core of what makes a heart-healthy eating pattern hasn't changed for decades," Lloyd-Jones says. One of the fastest ways to clean up your diet is to cut out sugary beverages like soda and fruit juice, which lacks the fiber that's in actual fruit. "We drink way too many of our calories," Sanghavi says. "And those calories don't fill us up the way real food does, so we have them in addition to everything else we're eating, with no nutritional benefit."

7. Crunch the numbers.
Not sure if you need to slim down? The easiest way to find out is to calculate your body mass index (BMI), a number based on your weight in relation to your height. You're considered overweight if you have a BMI of 25 or higher, which also means you're more likely to get heart disease. A BMI of 30 or higher puts you in the even higher-risk "obese" category. You can lose weight by taking in fewer calories each day than you burn off, which usually means a combination of eating less food (or healthier foods) and getting more exercise. Structured diets or calorie-counting programs and smartphone apps can help, "but there is no one best plan that will work for everyone," Lloyd-Jones says. "Find the one that works with your life and that you're able to sustain long-term."

8. Ditch the cigarettes, real and electronic.
Smoking and secondhand smoke are bad for your heart. If you smoke, quit, and avoid spending time around others who smoke as well. E-cigarettes, which have become a popular alternative to tobacco products, have both a good and a bad side, Lloyd-Jones says. "They don't contain the harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke, and they can help some people wean themselves off of smoking," he says. "But they still do contain nicotine, so your goal should be to quit completely, not just switch to a less toxic version."

You can't avoid stress entirely. It's part of a normal life. But you can choose how you deal with it. "I tell my patients that managing stress in a healthy way, whether it's meditation, yoga, or exercise, is really important," Sanghavi says. Having friends, a partner, or someone else you can lean on and talk to can also protect both your emotional health and your heart.

10. Throw your heart a birthday party!
You know that saying, "Not getting any younger?" It turns out you can get younger, at least when it comes to your heart health. Following all of these tips can help you keep a low "heart age," a tool created by the CDC to help people understand their true risk for heart disease.

Source: www.webmd.com
When it comes to matters of the heart, there’s usually hope. Lifestyle changes can dramatically lower your risk for most kinds of heart disease, including the most common type, coronary artery disease (CAD), which can lead to a heart attack.

To help protect your heart:

- Eat foods that are high in fiber, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stay active.
- Avoid smoking and alcohol.

Karen’s Korner—Heart Healthy Eating

A healthy diet and lifestyle are your best weapons to fight cardiovascular disease. Make some of the changes below for long-term benefits to your health and your heart.

Control your portion size. Use a small plate or bowl to help control your portions. Aim for ¼ of your plate to be lean protein, ¼ to be whole grains, and ½ of your plate to be fruits and vegetables.

Eat more vegetables and fruits. Vegetables and fruit are good sources of vitamins and minerals. They are rich in dietary fiber and can help prevent cardiovascular disease. Make ½ of your plate fruits and vegetables.

Choose whole grains. Whole grains are a good source of fiber and other nutrients that play a role in regulating blood pressure and heart health. Try whole grains such as whole wheat pasta and bread, quinoa, barley, farro, and oatmeal.

Choose lean proteins. Lean meat (chicken & turkey without skin), fish, seafood, low fat dairy, legumes and eggs are great sources of protein.

Reduce your sodium intake. Reducing your sodium intake is an important part of a heart healthy diet. Eating a lot of sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Limit unhealthy fats. Limit how much saturated and trans fats you eat to reduce your blood cholesterol and lower your risk of coronary artery disease. Choose fats such as olive and canola oil, nuts and nut butters, seeds, and avocado.

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Healthy Hint:

Visit Us At:
employeewellness.richmond.edu

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