

## What Can I Do to Lower My Cardiovascular Risk? Self-management

### How can I prevent having a heart attack or stroke?

The best thing you can do is to live a healthy lifestyle. The following can help to reduce your chance for developing cardiovascular disease. Any lifestyle change is a good start. It is important to continue with these healthy lifestyle choices even if your health care provider recommends that you start taking a medication as well.

- 1) Stop Smoking:** If you currently smoke, think about whether you are ready to try stopping. Your health care provider can help with options, including medications to support you. To get started visit:
  - Break It Off: <http://breakitoff.ca/>
  - What is the Single Best Thing You Can Do to Quit Smoking? (12 min video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z16vhtjWKLO>
- 2) Physical Activity:** Try to aim for 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week (e.g., brisk walking). Start slowly and build up to 30 minutes, at least 5 times a week. It is also recommended that you avoid long periods (> 1 – 2 hours) of “sitting” or not moving. To review the benefits of being physically active, watch these videos to learn more:
  - 23 and ½ hours (5 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F5Sly9JQao>
  - Make Your Day Harder (4 min): <http://www.makeyourdayharder.com/>
- 3) Healthy Eating:** Following what is called a Mediterranean type of eating pattern has been shown to lower your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. This type of diet includes the following: a high intake of olive oil, fruit, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and legumes; moderate intake of fish and poultry; low intake of full-fat dairy products, red meat, processed meats and sweets. Learn more about the Mediterranean diet (including recipes):
  - Oldways: <https://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet>
  - Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet-recipes/art-20046682>
  - What’s the Best Diet? Healthy Eating 101 (15 min video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqhYBTg73fw>
- 4) Alcohol:** If you drink, limit how much you have as any amount of alcohol can increase your health risks. Men: aim to have no more than 1 to 2 drinks per day. Women: no more than one drink per day. **Challenge yourself to have one drink free day a week if you can.** Visit the following for more information:
  - Rethink Your Drinking: <http://www.rethinkyourdrinking.ca/>
  - A Re-Think of the Way We Drink (10 min video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbKbq2lytC4>

### DID YOU KNOW

**...that being physically active or following a Mediterranean type of eating plan can reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke by 30%.**

### Every Step You Take to Improve your Health Counts!

Be sure to ask your health care provider about supports available in your community to help you make the changes you are ready for.

### My Community Resources to Consider:

- Stop Smoking** \_\_\_\_\_
- Physical Activity** \_\_\_\_\_
- Healthy Eating** \_\_\_\_\_
- How to Reduce My Stress and Worry?** \_\_\_\_\_

