

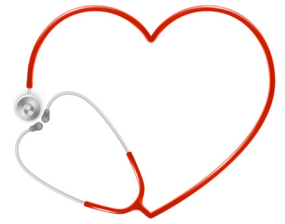


# FRESH CONVERSATIONS

Iowa Department of Public Health

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## Your Heart is a BEAST!



**Page 2**  
Quick tips on how to  
stay heart healthy



**Page 4**  
Love dessert? Try a  
healthy “ice cream”

**AMAZING! An adult heart pumps about 6,000-7,500 liters (1,500-2,000 gallons) of blood daily.**

We send cards that drip with tender messages and colorful hearts to express feelings of friendship and love. But get real. Your heart is a beast—an amazing muscle that beats true love 72 times per minute. ***That's 100,000 times each day!***

Do you want to feel a love beat?  
Feel your pulse.

Each time it beats, the heart muscle pushes about 1/3 cup of blood through your arteries, causing them to expand and contract in response to the flow of blood. By the time you are 70 years old, on average, your heart has pumped oxygenated blood throughout your body 2.5 billion times.

*Source: Mayo Clinic on Healthy Aging, 2013.  
Mayo Clinic.*

Our hearts are amazing but not invincible. With age, an adult heart naturally becomes less efficient. Here are some hard heart facts.

An older heart:

- Works harder to pump the same amount of blood through the body.
- Has stiffer walls and fills with blood more slowly.
- Can't increase how fast it beats (heart rate) as quickly as a younger heart can.
- Takes longer to bring down an elevated heart rate and blood pressure to normal after a stressful event.

In other words, you might notice that you can't roll with the punches quite as easily as you get older.

## Just the facts...

**CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE (CVD) refers to a number of conditions that affect your heart and blood vessels. The natural changes of aging alone generally don't cause CVD. But when these changes are combined with lifestyle risk factors—including smoking, stress, inactivity and obesity—your risk of serious disease increases.**



# Your Aging Cardiovascular System

The cardiovascular system is made up of your heart, blood vessels (arteries and veins) and blood. The system connects with every organ in your body.

Small consistent changes within this critical system can increase or decrease a person's risk of **heart disease**. For example, a major cause of heart disease is the buildup of fatty deposits in the walls of arteries over many years.

The most common aging change is increased stiffness of the large arteries, called arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. This causes **high blood pressure**, or hypertension.

The good news is there are things you can do to delay, lower, or possibly avoid or reverse your risk.

**AGE DOESN'T MATTER. It's not too late to reap the benefits of a heart-healthy diet and regular physical activity.**

## Follow a Heart-Healthy Diet

Choose foods low in trans and saturated fats, added sugars and salt. As we get older, we become more sensitive to salt, which can cause swelling in the legs and feet.

**Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and foods high in fiber**, like those made from whole grains.

The Mediterranean Diet and the Dash Eating Plan can help you create a heart-healthy way of eating—for life. You'll learn more about these eating patterns in future newsletters.

## Heart Healthy Lifestyle Keys to Remember

1. **Manage stress** through relaxation and good sleep.
2. **Stay active.** Regular exercise or movement increases the heart's capacity to pump and keeps blood pressure in check.
3. **Avoid smoking.** Smoking damages blood vessels and raises blood pressure.

Source: "Heart Health and Aging," National Institute on Aging. Retrieved Jan. 1, 2020. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/heart-health-and-aging>

Heart Facts Answers (Page 4): 1. Arteries; 2. Quarts; 3. Day; 4. Miles; 5. Hypertension



# Sleep Your Way to Heart Health

Healthy sleep patterns were associated with about a one-third reduced risk for heart disease and stroke, even among those with high genetic risk, a new study shows.

During a median follow-up of 8.5 years and with 7,280 documented heart disease and stroke events, individuals who scored 5 out of 5 for healthy sleep behaviors had a 35% lower risk for incident cardiovascular disease, a 34% lower risk for coronary heart disease, and a 34% lower risk for stroke, as compared to those who reported none or only one of these healthy sleep behaviors.

The five behaviors included:

- Early chronotype (prefer to get up early and go to bed early),
- Sleeping 7–8 hours per day,
- Never or rarely experiencing insomnia,
- Not snoring, and
- Not experiencing frequent excessive daytime sleepiness.

Source: Beck, D.L. "Better Sleep Linked to Reduced CVD, Stroke Risk," Dec. 26, 2019. Medscape. Retrieved Jan. 1, 2020. <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/923148>



## Love is in the Air...Fryer

Do you love the taste of fried foods? Most of us do. Air fryers can satisfy those fried-food cravings by offering a different solution to deep-frying in oils. It uses hot air to circulate at a high speed to cook food.

Registered dietitian Kylene Bogden describes some advantages of the popular appliance in a recent blog.

- Cooking in an air fryer is quick and easy.
- It provides a unique crispy texture, similar to a deep fryer.
- You can save money and avoid unhealthy fats found in ready-to-eat fried foods. But—you have to be willing to prepare food at home.
- Food Safety Tip! Don't judge food safety by the crispy crust. Use a food thermometer to check if the temperature of the actual food is high enough to kill harmful organisms—before you eat it.

Source: Best Food Facts. Oct. 11, 2019. Retrieved Jan. 1, 2020. <https://www.bestfoodfacts.org/love-is-in-the-air-fryer/>



**Sounds with a consistent frequency are known as PINK NOISE. They improve sleep quality by slowing and regulating brain waves, so that you wake up feeling better rested. A sound machine or phone apps can create these soothing sounds.**

## Sleepy Tips

Forty percent of American adults say they have difficulty falling asleep at least a few times each month. The most common reason? The inability to stop thinking about...whatever you can't stop thinking about.

1. **Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual** that works for you to separate sleep time from activities that can cause excitement or stress. These activities have shown promise: reading, deep breathing and writing a to-do list for the next day.
2. If you have trouble sleeping, **avoid naps**, especially in the afternoon.
3. **Exercise daily.** Vigorous exercise is best, but even light exercise is better than no activity.
4. **Evaluate your sleep environment.** Your bedroom should be cool—between 60 and 67 degrees—and free from noise that can disturb sleep.

Have you heard of “pink noise?” Natural sounds like falling rain and the sounds of the wind or ocean are in the pink noise category. “Pink noise” is a mix of high and low frequencies that sounds more balanced and natural than its better-known cousin, “white noise.”

Source: Denworth, L. “The Connection Between Writing and Sleep,” Jan. 12, 2018. Psychology Today. Retrieved Jan. 1, 2020. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/brain-waves/201801/the-connection-between-writing-and-sleep>







Janet and Darlene joined ***Fresh Conversations*** several years ago but they don't get bored. In fact, they don't like to miss a meeting.

At first, Janet went along to get her mom (Darlene) out of the house for more socialization. But to her surprise, the monthly meetings became one of her favorite activities!

Janet likes the tips and tricks that are easy to do and make her go-to recipes healthier. "It's the little things that you just don't think about. Like adding lentils to taco meat or spaghetti sauce to increase the amount of fiber and protein in the dish and make it healthier. I never thought that way before, but I am now."

***Fresh Conversations*** has helped Janet become a more confident shopper at the grocery store. She's more aware of information on food labels and uses it to choose what finally goes in her cart.

Janet appreciates that the program reinforces the advice of her mom's doctors: Make good food choices and MOVE more. ***Fresh Conversations*** is a win-win for this dynamic duo.

## Testimonial of the Month

Ely's Power Duo

### Heart Facts Puzzle

1. Blood vessels that carry oxygenated blood away from the heart are called \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The average adult body contains about five \_\_\_\_\_ of blood which continually circulates throughout the body.
3. The heart beats 100,000 times each \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Your body's system of blood vessels measure 60,000 \_\_\_\_\_.
5. High blood pressure is also called \_\_\_\_\_.

### Banana Ice Cream



#### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 ripe bananas
- 1 tablespoon nonfat milk
- *Optional ingredients:* 1 tablespoon peanut butter, chocolate hazelnut spread, cocoa powder, chocolate chips, or finely chopped fruit

**TRY ME!**

**70 calories per serving**  
**Serving: 1/3 cup**  
**Makes 3 servings**

#### DIRECTIONS:

- Thinly slice bananas, 1/4 inch thick or less.
- Place bananas in a tightly sealed container or zippered bag.
- Freeze bananas for at least 4 hours or overnight.
- Place frozen bananas in a blender or food processor. Add milk. Blend until thick and creamy. At first the banana will look crumbly, then sticky, then creamy. Stir in optional ingredients.
- Serve immediately.

*Recipe courtesy of Spend Smart, Eat Smart. Iowa State University, 2020.*  
<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/banana-ice-cream/>