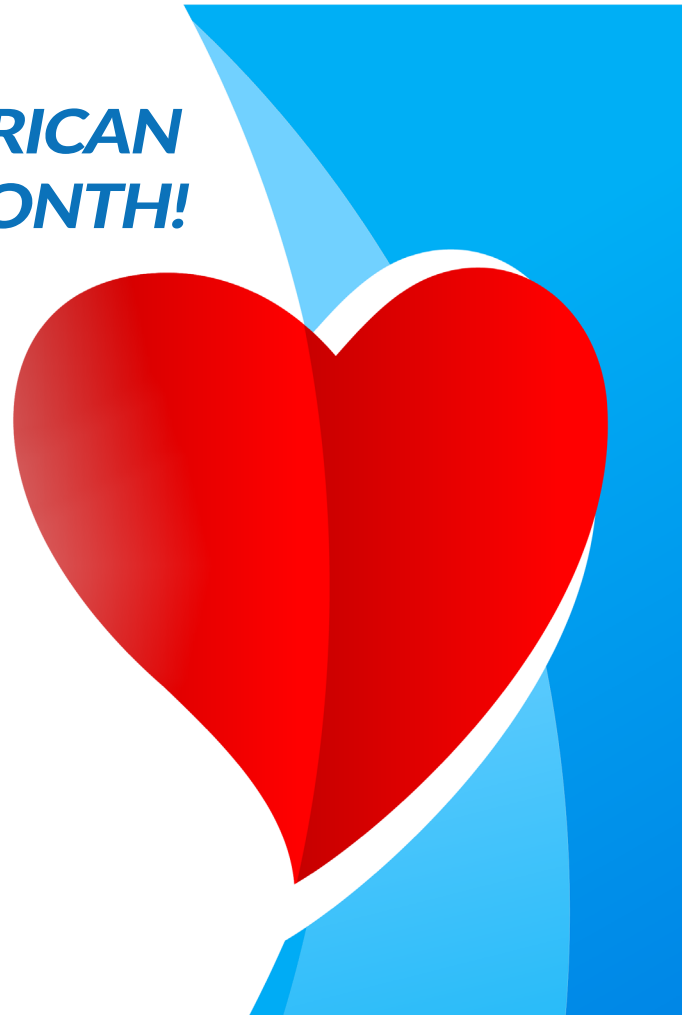


FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART HEALTH MONTH!

Written by: [nhlbi.nih.gov/](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/)

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Most middle-aged and young adults have one or more risk factors for heart disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or being a smoker or overweight. Having multiple risk factors increases your risk for heart disease.



Why Connecting is Good for Your Heart

Feeling connected with others and having positive, close relationships benefit our overall health, including our blood pressure and weight. Having people in our lives who motivate and care for us helps, as do feelings of closeness and companionship. Follow these heart-healthy lifestyle tips to protect your heart. It will be easier and more successful if you work on them with others, including by texting or phone calls if needed.

- Be more physically active
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a nutritious diet
- Quit smoking
- Reduce stress
- Get 7-9 hours of quality sleep

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Get yourself in the habit of asking yourself: Does this support the life I'm creating?

Quotes sourced from *Self By Design*

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Book of the Month Recommendation

Prevent And Reverse Heart Disease

by Caldwell B. Esselstyn Jr.

Caldwell B. Esselstyn, JR., M.D., was a researcher and clinician at the Cleveland Clinic for more than thirty-five years. In 1991, he served as the president of the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons and organized the first National Conference on the Elimination of Heart Disease. In 2005, he became the first recipient of the Benjamin Spock Award for Compassion in Medicine.

Move More

Invite family, friends, colleagues, or members of your community to join you in your efforts to be more physically active:

- Ask a colleague to walk “with you” on a regular basis, put the date on both your calendars, and text or call to make sure you both get out for a walk.
- Get a friend or family member to sign up for the same online exercise class, such as a dance class. Make it a regular date!
- Grab your kids, put on music, and do jumping jacks, skip rope, or dance in your living room or yard.

Aim for a Healthy Weight

Find someone in your friend group, at work, or in your family who also wants to reach or maintain a healthy weight. (If you’re overweight, even a small weight loss of 5–10 percent helps your health.) Check in with them regularly to stay motivated. Agree to do healthy activities, like walking or cooking a healthy meal, at the same time, even if you can’t be together. Share low-calorie, low-sodium recipes.

Quit Smoking

To help you quit, ask others for support or join an online support group. Research shows that people are much more likely to quit if their spouse, friend, or sibling does. Social support online can help you quit. All states have quit lines with trained counselors—call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). You’ll find many free resources to help you quit, such as apps, a motivational text service, and a chat line at BeTobaccoFree.hhs.gov and Smokefree.gov.

Manage Stress

Managing stress helps your heart health. Set goals with a friend or family member to do a relaxing activity every day, like walking, yoga, or meditation, or participate in an online stress-management program together. Physical activity also helps reduce stress. Talk to a qualified mental health provider or someone else you trust.

Improve sleep

Sleeping 7–9 hours a night helps to improve heart health. De-stressing will help you sleep, as does getting a 30-minute daily dose of sunlight. Take a walk instead of a late afternoon nap! Family members and friends: remind each other to turn off the screen and stick to a regular bedtime. Instead of looking at your phone or the TV before bed, relax by listening to music, reading, or taking a bath.

For more information or advice, contact eni online at:

www.eniweb.com

Tips for Making Eating Healthier Easier

Change Gradually

Add one more serving of vegetables a day. Read nutrition labels to choose the food lowest in saturated fat, sodium or salt and added sugar.

Vary Foods High in Proteins

Try a mix of lean cuts of meat.
Remove the skin from chicken.
Eat fish once or twice a week.
Eat two or more meals without meat each week.

Select Healthy, Tasty Snacks

Have a piece of fruit, a few unsalted snacks such as rice cakes, fat-free or low-fat yogurt or raw vegetables with a low-fat dip.

Find Substitutes

Try whole-wheat bread or brown rice instead of white bread or white rice. Try beans or seeds such as flax or sunflower seeds, if you’re allergic to nuts.