



Heat disease is a common health concern for many people because it's the No. 1 killer in the United States. Today, we know a lot about what causes heart disease, including the kinds of things people can do for themselves to help prevent it.

There are several health and lifestyle factors associated with heart disease. Luckily, these factors can be controlled with a commitment to personal health and a positive attitude toward daily life.

A person who wants to prevent heart disease should follow these guidelines:

- Quit or don't start smoking.
- Reduce the amount of fat in your diet, especially saturated fat, which is primarily found in animal foods. Some vegetable fats such as palm oil and coconut milk or

oil are also saturated, as are hydrogenated fats. Try to limit the percentage of daily calories from fat to no more than 30 percent of your total calories.

- Restrict the intake of cholesterol found in animal foods including butter, egg yolks, whole-milk dairy products, meat, poultry and fish.
- Eat a varied diet that emphasizes whole grains, vegetables, fruits and whole-grain breads and pastas.
- Cut down on salt and sugary foods.

Preventing Heart Disease

- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Learn to manage stress.
- Watch your blood pressure.

A person's age, sex, family history, medical history and other health and environmental factors can also affect the tendency to develop heart disease. The best way to start protecting against heart attack is to know your personal risk factors and to tailor your lifestyle changes to suit your particular medical needs.

For more information on your personal risk of heart disease and heart attack, consult your healthcare provider. For additional advice on developing good eating habits or an exercise program, ask your healthcare provider for specific information and referrals to support groups or other medical specialists.