

Let's Talk About Your Ticker!

BY BIJANA KADAKIA, ND, TRUE HEALTH MEDICINE PC

February is heart health month, so let's talk about your ticker! You probably know that the heart is the organ that pumps blood through the body and is essential for life. The heart is also our emotional center. The language we use to talk about the heart makes it clear that the heart is more than simply a pump. Someone may have a heart of gold, we might pour our heart out to someone or may set our heart on something. We also reach for our heart when we are surprised or afraid. Our emotional state has a strong influence on the heart and cardiovascular system. When we are embarrassed, we blush. When we are excited, our heart rate and blood pressure may increase.



positive outcomes. Having a dog is associated with lower blood pressure, for example. This may be because of the unconditional love of man's best friend, the stress relieving elements of the relationship or because they get us up and out the door for a walk on even the rainiest of days.

EXERCISE Moving is essential for heart health. The experts suggest thirty minutes per day or about two and a half hours per week. And conversely, if you have a sedentary job or lifestyle, it's important to get up regularly rather than sit for hours on end. Standing and walking at least 10 minutes of every hour is a good start.

EAT VEGGIES By that, I literally mean eat vegetables, but I also mean other healthful foods and eliminating junk foods. Start simple and get the junk food out - if you're still eating foods containing trans fats, clean those out of the cupboard. Ditch artificial sweeteners. Eat oatmeal. Start experimenting with vegetables - find preparation methods that you enjoy. Challenge yourself to eat 5 different colored vegetables every day. If you aren't currently eating 5½ cup servings every day, build up to that. Make water your primary beverage.

Changing your diet can reduce cholesterol and blood pressure and reverse established arterial blockage. There is no medication that can do that.

This list is not all inclusive, but it's a good place to start. If the list seems overwhelming, start with one habit. Whether this is all new to you or you are already well on your way, the team at True Health Medicine is here to help you take a deeper look at your health and to support you in changing your lifestyle for a healthier and happier heart.



Bijana Devo Kadakia is a naturopathic physician and licensed acupuncturist with True Health Medicine, PC, a group practice of naturopathic physicians and acupuncturists. The clinic is located at 8555 SW Tualatin Road, Tualatin, OR. 503-691-0901.

The heart is vulnerable to a variety of issues and heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Most of my patients indicate a family history of some type of heart disease on their paperwork. But family and genetics do not solely determine our health status. You have a lot of influence on your health and can work with your primary care provider to establish a plan to prevent heart disease, starting at any age, fitness level and lifestyle. Below are some examples of things you can do to reduce your risk.

STOP SMOKING. If you smoke, even a little, quitting can decrease risk of coronary artery disease by about half after a year. These improvements start quite quickly, though, with blood oxygen levels returning to normal after about 12 hours without a cigarette.

MEDITATE Meditation, tai chi or acupuncture can reduce blood pressure to healthy levels. Most studies of tai chi examine the effects in the elderly, but a study of women in their 40's showed a greater effect than previous studies, suggesting that starting earlier may be even more beneficial.

GET SOCIAL Humans are social creatures and studies have shown that people with social relationships tend to be healthier and live longer. Even relationships with pets can contribute to

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