

Wellness Connection



Heart disease doesn't happen just to older adults. It is happening to younger adults more and more often. This is partly because the conditions that lead to heart disease are happening at younger ages. February is Heart Month, the perfect time to learn about your risk for heart disease and the steps you need to take now to help your heart.

High rates of obesity and high blood pressure among younger people (ages 35-64) are putting them at risk for heart disease earlier in life. Half of all Americans have at least one of the top three risk factors for heart disease (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking).

Cardiovascular Diseases

Cardiovascular disease can refer to a number of conditions:

Heart Disease

Heart and blood vessel disease (also called heart disease) includes numerous problems, many of which are related to a process called atherosclerosis.

Atherosclerosis is a condition that develops when a substance called plaque builds up in the walls of the arteries. This buildup narrows the arteries, making it harder for blood to flow through. If a blood clot forms, it can block the blood flow. This can cause a heart attack or stroke.

Heart Attack

A heart attack occurs when the blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked by a blood clot. If this clot cuts off the blood flow completely, the part of the heart muscle supplied by that artery begins to die.

Most people survive their first heart attack and return to their normal lives, enjoying many more years of productive activity. But experiencing a heart attack does mean that you need to make some changes.

The medications and lifestyle changes that your doctor recommends may vary according to how badly your heart was damaged, and to what degree of heart disease caused the heart attack.

Stroke

An ischemic stroke (the most common type of stroke) occurs when a blood vessel that feeds the brain gets blocked, usually from a blood clot.

When the blood supply to a part of the brain is cut off, some brain cells will begin to die.

This can result in the loss of functions controlled by that part of the brain, such as walking or talking.

A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel within the brain bursts. This is most often caused by uncontrolled hypertension (high blood pressure).

Some effects of stroke are permanent if too many brain cells die after being starved of oxygen. These cells are never replaced.

The good news is that sometimes brain cells don't die during stroke — instead, the damage is temporary. Over time, as injured cells repair themselves, previously impaired function improves. (In other cases, undamaged brain cells nearby may take over for the areas of the brain that were injured.)

Cardiovascular Diseases Cont'd

Either way, strength may return, speech may get better and memory may improve. This recovery process is what stroke rehabilitation is all about.

Heart Failure

Heart failure, sometimes called congestive heart failure, means the heart isn't pumping blood as well as it should. Heart failure does not mean that the heart stops beating — that's a common misperception. Instead, the heart keeps working, but the body's need for blood and oxygen isn't being met.

Heart failure can get worse if left untreated. If your loved one has heart failure, it's very important to follow the doctor's orders

How to Prevent Heart Diseases at Any Age

For all Ages

- Choose a Healthy Eating Plan
- Be physically active.

In Your 20s

- Find a doctor and have a regular wellness exams.
- Be physically active.
- Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.

In your 30s

- Make heart-healthy living a family affair.
- Know your family history.
- Tame your stress.

In Your 40s

- Watch your weight. You may notice your metabolism slowing down.
- Have your blood sugar level checked.
- Don't brush off snoring.

In your 50s

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Learn the warning signs of a heart attack and stroke.
- Follow your treatment plan.

In Your 60s+

- Have an ankle-brachial index test.
- Watch your weight.
- Learn the warning signs of a heart attack and stroke.

Heart Smart Grilled Salmon Salad

Prep Time: 15 mins

Total Time: 30 mins



Ingredients

- 1 pound fresh salmon filet
- 3 cups baby salad greens
- ¼ cup walnut pieces
- 1 cup red or black grapes
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds
- 1 avocado pitted and sliced

Dressing

- 1 avocado
- Juice of 1 lime
- Juice of 1 orange + about 1 teaspoon zest
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Water
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Instructions

1. Heat grill to high, and spray with cooking oil. Sprinkle salmon with salt and pepper, and grill salmon, skin side down, for about 10 minutes, or until cooked as desired. Remove from heat and let cool.
2. Place greens, walnut pieces, grapes, pomegranate seeds in a large salad bowl and toss well.
3. While salmon is cooling, make the dressing, but placing avocado, citrus juices, orange zest, olive oil, dijon mustard, and honey in the bowl of a food processor. Process until smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste, and water if needed, to thin.