



SUPPORT NETWORK

benefiting the lives of all seniors is why

Living a Heart Healthy Life as an Active Senior



Sunrise Senior Living is a proud supporter of
the American Heart Association.

You're never too young—or too old—to take care of your heart.

Reducing risk of heart disease (and all cardiovascular diseases, including stroke) means making smart choices now that will pay off the rest of your life.

“New studies have shown that the risk factors that can lead to heart disease and stroke, such as high blood pressure, physical inactivity and obesity, also contribute to dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, memory loss and cognitive dysfunction,” says Ralph Sacco, M.D., chief of neurology at the Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami and past president of the American Heart Association.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Do you know where to go for help after you’ve had a stroke, been diagnosed with heart disease or have concerns for someone who is ailing and needs support? When it’s time to ask for support either as a survivor or as a loved one of someone who has cardiovascular disease or has had a stroke, we are here for you.

The Support Network offers an online community, as well as materials for starting face-to-face community-based support groups. Our goal is to connect people living with heart disease and stroke with others who are going through similar journeys.

Emotional support, both giving it and receiving it, can provide a positive health impact. So, as you transition into the next phase of senior living, let the Support Network be there for you.

? For more information, go to www.heart.org/seniorhealth.



Lack of exercise, a poor diet and other bad habits can take their toll over the years. People at any age can benefit from simple steps to keep their heart and brain healthier for enhanced senior living.

With age comes an increased risk for heart disease and stroke. Your blood pressure, cholesterol and other heart-related numbers tend to rise as you age. Watching your numbers closely and managing any health problems that arise—along with eating a healthy diet and getting exercise—can help you live better.

The American Heart Association has developed **Life's Simple 7**—these measures have one unique thing in common: any person, of any age, can make these changes. The steps are not expensive or difficult to take and even modest improvements to your health will make a big difference. Start with one or two. This simple, seven-step list has been developed to deliver on the hope we all have—to live a longer, more productive, healthier life.



Get Active



Eat Better



Lose Weight



Stop Smoking



Control Cholesterol



Manage Blood Pressure



Reduce Blood Sugar

In this Guide, you will find the information you need to get started *Living a Heart Healthy Life as an Active Senior*. Using all of the tools at hand—emotional support, education and prevention—can help you transition into an active, healthy lifestyle.



For more information, go to www.heart.org/seniorhealth.

Why Get Active?

We all know that exercise is good for us, but nearly 80% of Americans do not get the physical activity they need. Living the active senior life is one of the most rewarding gifts you can give yourself and those you love. The American Heart Association recommends regular physical activity, including aerobic activity and muscle-strengthening activity, for healthy aging. Simply put, regular physical activity can improve your quality of life. To promote and maintain health, older adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five times per week or 20 minutes of vigorous activity three times each week. Moderate and vigorous intensity varies from person to person. For some older adults a moderate-intensity walk is a slow walk, and for others it is a brisk walk.

Older adults also benefit from muscle-strengthening and endurance activities at least two days per week. Flexibility and balance exercises are also an important part of a physical activity routine. Consider exceeding these minimum recommendations if you have no conditions that preclude higher amounts of physical activity.

Regular exercise can reduce risk of cardiovascular disease, certain types of stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, cancer of the colon and breast, anxiety, and depression. Regular physical activity can also reduce risk of falls and injuries from falls. You are never too old to exercise.

Older adults should have a plan for getting sufficient amounts of each type of physical activity. If you are not currently active at the recommended levels, this may include a gradual approach to increase your activity over time. If you have a chronic condition, work with your healthcare provider to develop a plan that best suits your needs.

Studies have concluded that physical activity protects against cognitive decline as well. Physical activity can benefit your heart, brain and body. When looking for that next step in senior care, look for options that will help maintain an active social lifestyle. Also, use the [Support Network](#) as a resource for sharing and learning new activity tips.

Aerobic Activity Tips

“Moderately intense activities” and “vigorous activities” will vary from person-to-person based on their individual fitness level. On a 10-point scale, where sitting is 0 and all-out effort is 10, moderate-intensity activity is a 5 or 6 and produces noticeable increases in heart rate and breathing. On the same scale, vigorous-intensity activity is a 7 or 8 and produces large increases in heart rate and breathing. It is important to do what is right for you so you can get the benefits of exercise and prevent injuries. With sufficient skill, experience, fitness and training, older adults can achieve high levels of physical activity.

There are six important steps to increasing physical activity:

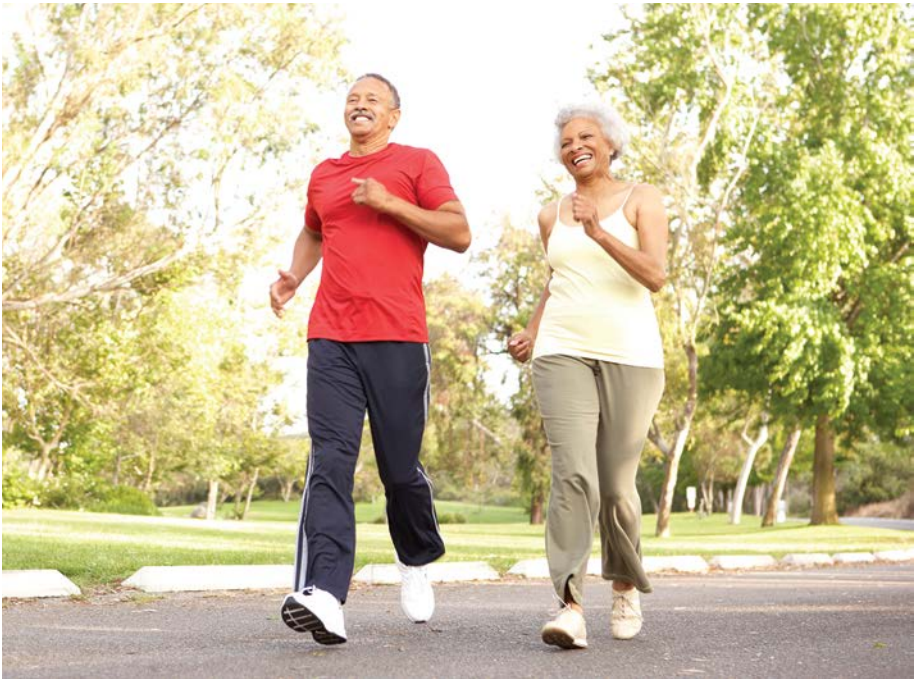
- 1. Reduce sedentary behavior.**
- 2. Increase moderate activity, not necessarily attaining high levels of activity.**
- 3. Take a stepwise, gradual approach that works for YOU.**
- 4. Engage in all recommended types of activity, including muscle-strengthening.**
- 5. Focus on opportunities within your community to increase your activity level.**
- 6. Have a plan to prevent injury.**



Walking

Everyone has a different level of fitness, so “moderate” may range between slow to brisk walks depending on the person. For seniors who’ve led relatively sedentary lifestyles, starting a physical activity regimen by simply walking around your yard, apartment complex or senior living community is a natural and low-cost start. Remember, begin slowly and work up from there. Start with 10 minutes and work up to 30 minutes per day.

Encourage others in your community to walk with you. Find or create a walking club in your community to make it a fun social experience and get others involved.



Walking Your Dog Helps Your Heart

If you are a pet person, consider living in a retirement community or complex that allows for pets. Having pets may protect you from heart disease, and there are a variety of reasons that may be at work that influence this relationship. It may be that healthier people are more likely to be pet owners or that people with dogs tend to exercise more. Pets also play a role in providing social support to their owners, which is an important factor in helping you stick with a new habit or adopting a new healthy behavior.



How man's best friend could help reduce heart disease risk:

- Regular dog walking means more physical activity.
- Dog owners are 54% more likely to meet physical activity recommendations.
- Pet ownership, particularly dog ownership, is probably associated with decreased cardiovascular disease risk.

Muscle Strengthening Activities

To promote and maintain health and physical independence, older adults will benefit from performing activities that maintain or increase muscular strength and endurance for a minimum of two days each week. It is recommended that 8–10 exercises be performed on two or more nonconsecutive days per week using the major muscle groups.

To maximize strength development, a resistance (weight) should be used that allows 10–15 repetitions for each exercise. The level of effort for muscle-strengthening activities should be moderate to high. On a 10-point scale, where no movement is 0, and maximal effort of a muscle group is 10, moderate-intensity effort is a 5 or 6 and high-intensity effort is a 7 or 8.

Muscle strengthening activities include a progressive-weight training program, weight bearing calisthenics and similar resistance exercises that use the major muscle groups. For more senior exercise tips go to www.heart.org/seniorhealth.

Why Eat Better?

Good nutrition is the cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle and to fighting heart disease and stroke at any age. As you get older, your body needs less food as your metabolism slows—but it is still important to feed your body well so that it gets the nutrients it needs. When selecting a senior living community, look for one that offers a menu with a variety of nutritious foods.

Focus your diet on good foods, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish and nuts, while limiting red meat, sodium, and sugary foods and beverages. Get a variety of these foods so your whole body gets the important dietary building blocks it needs, including the nutrients your brain needs to stay healthy. Select foods that are low in saturated (found mostly in foods of animal origin) and trans fats (found in hydrogenated vegetable oils), sodium and added sugars. You can adapt this pattern to your calorie requirements, cultural food preferences and medical conditions such as diabetes.

For nutritional shopping guides, recipes and tips go to www.heart.org/seniorhealth and keyword search nutrition, recipe and Simple Cooking with Heart.



Why Lose Weight?

If you have too much fat—especially if a lot of it is at your waist—you're at higher risk for such health problems as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Did you know 71.6% of adults 60 and over are overweight or obese; and 35.4% are obese? These statistics are especially concerning since obesity is now recognized as a major, independent risk factor for heart disease. If you are unsure of an appropriate target weight, talk with your healthcare provider to determine the healthiest weight for you.

Why is Losing Weight Important for My Health?

Imagine carrying around a 30-pound backpack all day, every day! It would be a strain, just like extra body weight. Shedding those extra pounds can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and other conditions. When you give yourself the gift of active living, you can improve your blood pressure and help yourself feel better, too.

What Can I Do to Lose Weight?

If you're overweight or obese, you can reduce your risk for heart disease by successfully losing weight and keeping it off. Even losing 5% of body weight can reduce blood pressure in adults with elevated cardiovascular disease risk.

- **Know your calorie needs:** When planning for weight loss, it's crucial to understand what your recommended calorie intake should be for your age, sex and level of physical activity.
- **Track your calories:** Even if you only track what you eat for a few days, you'll learn a lot about your habits. Find out the amount of calories you're consuming compared to the energy calories you're burning off at your level of physical activity. It's a matter of balancing calories in with calories out, and learning to plan accordingly.
- **Physical activity:** living a healthy and active senior lifestyle can help you achieve or maintain a healthy weight.



Losing weight can be difficult. For more tips, go to www.heart.org/seniorhealth.

STOP SMOKING

Why Stop Smoking?

Cigarette smokers have a higher risk of developing a number of diseases, including cancer and cardiovascular disease. If you smoke, quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health. Your lungs can begin to heal as soon as you quit. No matter how much or how long you've smoked, when you quit smoking, your risk of heart disease and stroke starts to drop. In the year after you quit smoking, your excess risk of future coronary heart disease drops by 50%. If you find yourself reaching for a cigarette when you're stressed or anxious, remind yourself of the costs of smoking and what you could gain by not smoking. Smoking is expensive and damages your health, whereas quitting will improve the air that you breathe and improve your health. Sharing your smoking cessation story could save someone else's life. Share your story with others on our [Support Network](#).

The Impact of Smoking on Health

If you want to live a long and healthy life, breaking the nicotine addiction is very important. Smoking increases your risk for coronary heart disease, hardened arteries, aneurysm and blood clots, and it can reduce your good cholesterol (HDL). Blood clots and hardened arteries increase your risks for heart attack, stroke and peripheral artery disease. Smoking can also reduce your lung capacity, making it harder to get the physical activity you need for better health.

What Can I Do to Stop Smoking?

You can do **whatever it takes** to quit! One day at a time, one hour at a time, you can learn to replace the craving for cigarettes with healthier options. If you slip and have a smoke, you haven't "failed." Instead, you have an opportunity to notice why you did it, and make different choices next time.

Also, if you are a grandparent, you are in a unique position to guide your grandchildren. Talk to them about cigarette smoking. Many people begin their addiction during adolescence and spend years wishing they had never started. Learning to say "no" to cigarettes is learning to say "yes" to your better health.



For more support, go to www.heart.org/seniorhealth.

CONTROL CHOLESTEROL

Why Control Cholesterol?

When you control your cholesterol, you are giving your arteries their best chance to remain clear of blockages. Cholesterol is a waxy substance and our bodies use it to make cell membranes and some hormones, but when you have too much bad cholesterol (LDL), it combines with white blood cells and forms plaque in your veins and arteries. These blockages lead to heart disease and stroke.

The Cost of High Cholesterol

If your total cholesterol is high, you need to take action. High cholesterol can cause blocked arteries, and like a multi-car pile-up, one problem often creates another. Lowering your cholesterol helps your whole body get adequate blood supply and keeps your circulatory organs functioning well.

What Can I Do to Control Cholesterol?

Your liver and your body's cells make about 75% of the cholesterol in your blood. The other 25% comes from your food. The American Heart Association recommends the following:

- **Change what you eat.**
- **Schedule a cholesterol screening and stay current on your check-ups.**
- **Get active. When you exercise, you increase your body's ability to make good cholesterol.**
- **Reach and maintain a healthy weight.**

Finally, if your doctor prescribes cholesterol medication for you, it is important that you take it as prescribed and follow the other healthy lifestyle recommendations, too. If you have high cholesterol, talk to your family to encourage them to have their levels checked. LDL (bad) cholesterol is produced naturally by the body, but some people inherit a gene that causes them to make too much LDL. There are times, when watching your cholesterol, that having someone who understands the same challenges you are facing can be beneficial. Use our [Support Network](#) to connect with others who understand.

MANAGE BLOOD PRESSURE

Why Manage Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. When your blood pressure stays within healthy ranges, you reduce the strain on your heart, arteries and kidneys, which keeps you healthier longer.

By keeping your blood pressure in the healthy range, you are:

- 1. Reducing your risk of overstretched or injured blood vessel walls**
- 2. Reducing your risk of blockages, which also protects your heart and brain**
- 3. Protecting your entire body so that your tissues receive regular supplies of oxygen-rich blood**



What Can I Do to Reduce My Blood Pressure?

Good news! High blood pressure is manageable. Whether your blood pressure is high or normal (normal is less than 120 mm Hg systolic AND less than 80 mm Hg diastolic or <120/80), the lifestyle modifications listed here provide a great heart-healthy living plan for all of us.

In addition, these changes may reduce your blood pressure without the use of prescription medications:

- **Eating a heart-healthy diet, which includes reducing sodium**
- **Enjoying regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight**
- **Managing stress, limiting alcohol and avoiding tobacco smoke**



REDUCE BLOOD SUGAR

Why Reduce Blood Sugar?

If your fasting blood sugar level is below 100, you are in the healthy range. If not, your results could indicate diabetes or pre-diabetes.

After eating a meal, your food is broken down by the digestive system and blood sugar (or glucose) rises. Your body makes a hormone called insulin; with the help of insulin, the body's cells take up the glucose and use it for energy.

Diabetes or insulin resistance can lead to dangerously low or high glucose levels in the blood. People with this condition often feel overly tired or thirsty. Diabetes can cause your blood sugar to rise to dangerous levels, and when this happens, your body may try to compensate by draining fluid out of your cells to dilute the excessive sugar, creating excessive thirst and hydration problems. Over time, high levels of blood sugar can damage your heart, kidneys, eyes and nerves.

No matter your age, if you have been diagnosed with diabetes or pre-diabetes, you can manage the condition and live a full and active life. The **Support Network** offers a secure environment for people to share their concerns and exercise tips and celebrate their successes — they can be found at www.heart.org/seniorhealth.

Why is Controlling Blood Sugar Important for My Health?

Controlling your blood sugar helps protect your vital organs. The American Heart Association considers diabetes one of the seven major controllable risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD). When insulin resistance or diabetes occurs along with other CVD risk factors (such as obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol), the risk of heart disease and stroke is higher.

What Can I Do to Reduce Blood Sugar?

When diabetes or pre-diabetes is detected, a doctor may prescribe the following: changes in eating habits, weight control, exercise programs and medication to keep it in check. It's important to work closely with your healthcare provider to manage the condition and control any other risk factors. In general, you should:

- **Limit added sugars that are found in soda, candy and sugary desserts.**
- **Get regular physical activity!**
- **Take medications or insulin if it is prescribed for you.**

When looking for an assisted living facility or longer term senior care, be sure to have detailed conversations on matters that are important to you and your health, such as maintaining proper nutrition and managing the needs of a diabetic senior.

The good news is that by managing your blood sugar, you may be able to slow the progression of long-term complications. Committing to lifestyle changes may add up to surprising improvements in your diabetes control.

Remember, the **Support Network** offers people a place to ask questions, share concerns or fears, provide helpful tips, and find encouragement and inspiration. By following the **Life's Simple 7** measures you are increasing your ability to sustain an active and fulfilling lifestyle. For more information on any of the seven measures—getting active, eating better, losing weight, smoking cessation, controlling cholesterol, managing your blood pressure and reducing blood sugar—please go to www.heart.org/seniorhealth. You can complete our **My Life Check**[®] assessment to get your personal heart score and a custom plan with the seven steps you may need to improve your heart health.



SUPPORT NETWORK

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1-800-AHA-USA-1

 HEART	 STROKE
 SMALLEST SURVIVORS	 SUPPORT GROUP LEADERS

**Meet others like you. Share your story.
Find & give support.**

www.heart.org/seniorhealth

There's strength in numbers!



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