

# 4 simple steps to a HEALTHY HEART



Prevention is the best medicine. 8 in 10 cases of premature heart disease & stroke are preventable through healthy lifestyle behaviours.

## MOVE

Keep moving at any age and at any level of fitness. Exercise has many benefits beyond simple fitness and flexibility. It stimulates the body's immune system, reduces blood thickening so it clots less easily, improves brain function and lowers blood pressure. Exercise can even prevent some forms of cancer.

Research in older patients with age-related muscle wasting has shown that strength training was found to prevent disability, slow down dementia and reduce the risk of accidental falls.

Independence and good health in later life are closely related to physical fitness.

## MEALS

Eat intelligently. Good nutrition extends beyond just controlling your intake of cholesterol, calories and chocolate. There is also great benefit in understanding, for example, the important effects of trans fats (bad for you), polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats (good for you). How the body metabolises different carbohydrates (sugars) and the impact this has on weight, diabetes and body fat deposits.

Research shows that the right balance between food intake and exercise is vital for optimum weight, fitness and health.

Improved nutritional knowledge leads to improved health.

## MEASUREMENT

Keep track of your health measurements, including your cholesterol level, blood pressure, weight, sugar level, waist circumference and exercise capacity.

Visit your family doctor regularly, so they can measure and monitor your heart health.

## MENTAL APPROACH

Stay optimistic. Studies show your state of mind can protect, as well as damage heart health. Important risk factors that may lead to heart disease include stress, anger and depression.

They can be as damaging as high cholesterol levels in causing heart disease. Unaccustomed stress such as the loss of a family member can trigger heart attacks in an otherwise well individual. Conversely, a positive state of mind, a supportive community and personal happiness may help reduce the risk of a bad cardiovascular event.

## IN SUMMARY

Movement and exercise, intelligent choice of Meals, Measurement of health indicators and maintaining an optimistic Mental attitude (the 4-M approach) form an effective approach to achieving heart health before and after serious illness, at any age.

Adapted with permission from Heart Research Australia [heartresearch.com.au](http://heartresearch.com.au)



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