

The Post Rock Connection
Post Rock Extension District #1 Family and Consumer Sciences Column
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By Jamie Rathbun, Family and Community Wellness Agent

Tips to Lower Your Risk for Heart Disease

Did you know heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an American has a heart attack every 33 seconds.

February is American Heart Month to raise awareness about heart disease.

Heart disease refers to several different types of heart conditions. The most common type of heart disease is coronary artery disease, which occurs when the coronary arteries become narrowed or blocked and can cause chest pain, heart attack, or stroke. Additional heart conditions involve the heart valves, muscles, or rhythm.

Check out the following tips to lower your risk for heart disease.

Know Your Risk Factors

Several factors can increase your risk for heart disease. Your age, gender, race, ethnicity, or family history are risk factors you cannot control.

You can modify, treat, or control the following factors to help lower heart disease risk:

- High blood pressure
- High low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Overweight and obesity
- Poor diet
- Physical inactivity

Eat Healthy

The American Heart Association recommends eating a healthy diet that includes:

- Choosing foods lower in saturated and trans fats. Select lean beef (e.g. round, sirloin, chuck, loin) lean or extra lean ground beef (no more than 15% fat), lean ham and lean pork (e.g. tenderloin, loin chop).
- Choosing lower sodium options by using the Nutrition Facts label to compare the amount of sodium in ham, processed sandwich meats (e.g. turkey, chicken, ham), canned foods, soup, bread, and frozen meals.
- Drinking water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g. regular soft drinks, energy or sports drinks, fruit drinks, sweetened coffee and teas).
- Picking fruit as a naturally sweet dessert or snack most of the time instead of eating cookies, cakes, pies, and ice cream.

Walk For Your Heart

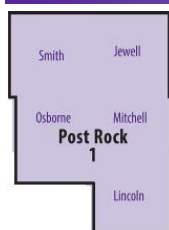
One of the most effective forms of exercise to achieve heart health is walking. Walking does not require any special skills. It is safe, free, requires no equipment, and costs nothing to get started.

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend at least 150 minutes per week of moderate physical activity for adults.

One way to achieve 150 minutes per week is to do 30 minutes of brisk walking for 5 days of the week. If you are short on time, break up your walks into shorter sessions. If you are just starting to get active, don't worry about reaching 150 minutes per week just yet. Set a reachable goal and work toward the recommended amount. Just remember to move more and sit less during the day.

If you have a chronic condition or disability, talk with your healthcare provider about what types and amounts of physical activity are right for you before making too many changes.

The Post Rock District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith Counties. Contact Jamie Rathbun at jrathbun@ksu.edu or by calling 785-524-4432. Stay connected with “Post Rock Extension” on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Our website is www.postrock.ksu.edu.



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