

Lifestyles

for Heart Disease



A newsletter for members of
Blue Care Network, BCN Service Company, Blue Cross Complete and BCN AdvantageSM



INSIDE:
Your heart
action plan

Shake your salt habit with these everyday tips

Americans have a salty habit. But too much salt can increase your blood pressure. Keeping your blood pressure at 120/80 is important for everyone. But it's especially important for those with heart disease.

Trimming salt from your diet may be easier than you think. Here's some advice to help you kick the salt habit:

- Eat fewer high-sodium processed foods and more fresh foods, such as fruits and vegetables, lean meats, poultry and fish. Look for dry and fresh beans and peas, too.
- Prepare more foods at home to control sodium. Don't add salt when you cook pasta, rice, cereals and vegetables.
- Add some spice. There are dozens of herbs and spices that can add extra flavor to your meals. On beef, try basil, thyme or fennel. Curry, ginger or sage is great on chicken. And, cumin and saffron are good complements for rice. Start by using small amounts. If you like the flavor, use more next time.
- Limit your intake of cured food, such as bacon and ham and foods packed in brine, such as pickles, pickled vegetables, olives and sauerkraut.
- Check condiments. Some barbecue sauces, ketchup and mustard can be high in sodium.
- Ask restaurants not to add salt to your food. Order lower-sodium options if available.
- Read the Nutrition Facts label when you shop. Buy foods low in sodium.

There are simple solutions to monitoring your salt intake. Even trying one or two may help regulate your blood pressure.

Health checks

Every year, ask your doctor about these wellness checks. You may need some of them more than once a year.

- ✓ Blood pressure
- ✓ Total cholesterol (HDL, LDL, triglycerides)
- ✓ Flu shot
- ✓ Don't smoke. If you do and need help quitting, contact Quit the Nic, our free program, at 1-800-811-1764, from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. TTY users should call 1-800-240-3050.

Also, check with your doctor to see if your pneumonia shot is up to date.

Reminder:
Don't forget your flu shot
Flu season is here. Having a chronic condition like heart disease puts you at increased risk for flu complications. Be sure to make an appointment with your doctor to receive your flu shot if you haven't already gotten one.



The heart and brain connection: Heart disease fuels stroke risk

Heart disease can increase your risk for stroke. How? Heart disease can cause a condition called atrial fibrillation. It occurs when your heart beats very fast and in an irregular pattern. The abnormal flow of blood can cause blood clots. These clots can travel from the heart to the brain and cause a stroke.

The good news is that you may be able to prevent AF. Many of the same steps that lower your risk for AF are steps you take to stay healthier with heart disease. To reduce your risk:

- Don't smoke. If you do and need help quitting, contact Quit the Nic, our free program, at 1-800-811-1764, from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. TTY users should call 1-800-240-3050.
- Exercise often.
- Limit or avoid alcohol. Stick to two drinks or less a day for men and one drink or less a day for women.
- Eat a healthy diet that's full of whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Take your medicines and visit your doctor regularly.

By following these simple tips, you can actively help combat heart disease and all the complications that can arise from it.



Real readers, real advice

Who knows more about living with heart disease than those facing the same daily issues as you? We'd love to share your feedback to help support and inspire other members living with heart disease. Just email us at bcnccm@bcbsm.com with any tips you'd like to share with other readers.



My heart action plan

Setting and reaching goals is an important part of your heart disease care. Your doctor is your partner in doing this. Take this form with you to your next appointment and talk to your doctor about your test results and personal goals. Check in with your doctor on your progress and ask him or her how often you should update this plan.

| My personal goal | My results today | What I can do |
|---|------------------|---|
| Blood pressure: _____ By date: _____ <i>Short-term target: Below 140/90</i> <i>Long-term target: Below 120/80</i> | | <input type="checkbox"/> Follow an eating plan from my doctor <input type="checkbox"/> Use only 1 teaspoon of salt per day (2,300 mg) <input type="checkbox"/> Take my blood pressure medicine as directed |
| LDL cholesterol: _____ By date: _____ <i>Target: Less than 100</i> | | <input type="checkbox"/> Follow a low-fat, low-cholesterol meal plan <input type="checkbox"/> Have a fasting cholesterol test at least every year <input type="checkbox"/> Take my cholesterol-lowering and heart medicines as directed |
| Amount of exercise: _____ By date: _____ <i>Target: At least 30 minutes on most days</i> | | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask my doctor about an exercise program <input type="checkbox"/> Walk or _____ (another exercise) for _____ minutes, _____ days a week |
| BMI: _____ By date: _____ <i>Short-term target: Less than 30</i> <i>Long-term target: Between 19 and 24</i> | | <input type="checkbox"/> Make healthy food choices <input type="checkbox"/> Drink water every day |
| Tobacco use: _____ By date: _____ <i>Target: No tobacco use</i> | | <input type="checkbox"/> Join a smoking cessation program |

(continued on next page)

My heart action plan *continued*

| My personal goal | My results today | What I can do |
|--|------------------|---|
| <p>Alcohol use: _____</p> <p>By date: _____</p> <p><i>Target: No more than two drinks per day for men and no more than one drink per day for women</i></p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Limit my alcohol use (A drink is one 12-ounce beer, 4 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits.) |
| <p>Blood sugar (A1C): _____</p> <p>By date: _____</p> <p><i>Target: Fasting blood sugar less than 110 and HbA1c less than 7 percent</i></p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Keep my daily blood sugar in a good range<input type="checkbox"/> Follow my meal plan<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a diabetes checkup with my doctor (HbA1c, eye and foot exams)<input type="checkbox"/> Take my diabetes medicines as directed |

This heart-healthy plan was created for:

_____ on _____
Name Date



Comparing apples with pears: Know your body type

People who tend to put on weight around their waists are said to be “apple-shaped,” while those who gain at the hips and thighs are called “pear-shaped.” Being apple-shaped can be harder on your heart. Why?

A large waist-to-hip ratio can put strain your heart, even if you look slim or your weight is considered normal. Fat cells that collect in the upper body have different qualities than those in the lower body.

Why do some of us put on fat around our waists, and thus have higher health risks? Your hormones may be to blame. This may be why men tend to have more abdominal fat than women. Genes and aging are two other factors that may play a role.

Another key reason for extra belly fat is something you can control — exercise. Exercise is one way to help you lose belly fat or keep you from getting it in the first place. Most people could gain similar waist-whittling benefits from walking 30 minutes a day.

How do you measure up?

So what’s an unhealthy waist size? Men are at risk

if their waist measures 40 inches or more, while women are at risk if their waist is 35 inches or more. To measure your waist, all you need is a tape measure. The tape should be snug around your waist but it shouldn’t squeeze into your skin.

Talk to your doctor about what you can do if your waist measures more than 40 inches if you’re a man or more than 35 inches if you’re a woman.

Find Balance®

Keeping a healthy weight is important when you have heart disease. Our personalized Balance program can help you define your weight loss goals and keep you on track to meeting them.

To access this program:

- Visit bcbsm.com.
- Log in as a member.
- Click on the *Health and Wellness* tab.
- Click *BlueHealthConnection*®.
- Click *My Digital Health Coaching* and then click *Balance*.



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Health or wellness or prevention information

If you have questions about this program, have received this information in error, would prefer not to receive further information or want to inquire about resources for members with special needs, please call:

1-800-392-4247 | 1-800-257-9980 (TTY)
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

For Customer Service, please call the number listed on the back of your ID card.

➤ HEALTHY LIVING & GOOD EATING

Potato and Pork Curry

Servings: 4

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 teaspoon olive oil | |
| 1 medium onion, cut in wedges | |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | |
| 2 teaspoons curry powder | 4 potatoes (medium-sized), cooked and cut in chunks |
| 1 can (14 ounces) low- or no-sodium canned tomatoes | 2 cups cooked pork, cubes or strips |
| 1 can (14 ounces) no-salt-added green beans, drained | 1/3 cup seedless raisins |



Place oil, onion, garlic and curry in two-quart casserole. Microwave on high for two minutes. Stir. Add tomatoes and green beans.

Microwave on high four minutes, stirring after two minutes. Add potatoes, meat and raisins. Mix well.

Microwave on high two minutes or until hot. Season with pepper, if desired.

Nutritional information per serving: 350 calories; 6 g fat; 50 g carbohydrates; 26 g protein; 65 mg cholesterol; 200 mg sodium; 7 g fiber.

