Live Well, Work Well

February 2022

Brought to you by Cavanaugh & Co.

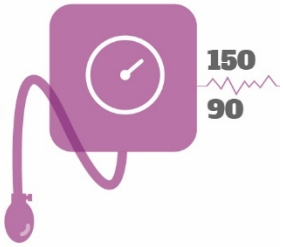
Reducing Your Stress During American Heart Month

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. In fact, half of all Americans are currently considered "at risk" for heart disease, and that figure continues to rise. Due to the prevalence of the disease, February is recognized as American Heart Month to raise awareness about heart disease and prevention. To celebrate, you can focus on dialing down your stress level.

Stress and Heart Health

While there are risk factors that contribute to heart disease that you can't control, there are many things you can do to maintain your heart health. One of those things is to reduce your stress. Having too much stress for too long is bad for your heart.

Chronic stress may lead to high blood pressure, which can increase your risk for heart attack and stroke.



Some people may handle their stress with poor health behaviors—such as smoking, eating unhealthy foods and drinking alcohol. Such behaviors can put you at an increased risk for heart disease and stroke.

Take Charge of Your Stress

Managing stress is good for your health and well-being. Taking steps to reduce your stress will improve your overall health. Try these tips:

- **Simplify your schedule.** If you're feeling rushed or too busy, prioritize essential items on your calendar and to-do lists.
- **Practice relaxation techniques.** Try listening to relaxing music to help you calm down or look into stress management or relaxation classes.
- **Get enough sleep.** Adults should strive for seven to nine hours of quality sleep each night.
- **Exercise regularly.** Movement can get your blood and endorphins flowing, relieving stress, tension, anxiety and depression.
- **Maintain social connections.** It's important to make time for friends and family and talk with people you trust.

If the stresses in your life become more than you can bear or manage with these techniques, consider seeking professional assistance.

The Benefits Resource

This article is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as professional advice. Readers should contact a health professional for appropriate advice. © 2022 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.

Benefits of Reducing Your Alcohol Intake

Excessive alcohol use is responsible for 1 in 10 deaths among working-age adults every year, according to the CDC. Excessive alcohol consumption has immediate effects that increase risks associated with injuries, motor vehicle crashes and alcohol poisoning. It can also cause serious long-term health problems like liver disease, high blood pressure, stroke, depression and cancer.

In addition to lowering your risk for those short- and long-term impacts, there are multiple health benefits for drinking less. By eliminating or cutting back on alcohol, you may experience:

- Increased energy
- Better sleep quality
- Improved mental health
- Boosted immune system
- Healthier complexion

After weighing the risks and benefits of alcohol, you may be considering reducing your alcohol consumption. If you or a loved one are concerned about alcohol use, talk to a doctor or use the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).

What's a Standard Drink?

Drinking in moderation means drinking up to one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks for men. Actual alcohol by volume (ABV) varies by product, but here are standard drink guidelines:

12 ounces of beer (5% ABV)

5 ounces of wine (12% ABV)

1.5 ounces of distilled spirits (40% ABV or 80 proof)

Should You Take Daily Aspirin for Your Heart?

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recently changed its guidance on aspirin use, stating that most adults do not need to take aspirin to prevent first heart attacks or strokes. This change to a long-standing recommendation is based on new evidence that the potential harms of aspirin—including major bleeding—cancel out the benefits. Here's an overview of the new guidance:

- Adults ages 40 to 59 who are at a higher risk for cardiovascular disease but don't have a history of it should decide with their health care provider whether to start taking aspirin.
- Adults 60 years and older shouldn't start taking aspirin to prevent heart disease and stroke.
- Adults who are already taking aspirin for a previous heart attack or stroke should continue to do so unless told otherwise by their clinician.

Talk to your doctor if you have questions about taking aspirin.

Whole Grain Strawberry Pancakes

Makes: 7 servings

Ingredients

1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
3 Tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
3 eggs
6 ounces low-fat vanilla yogurt
¾ cup water
3 Tbsp. canola oil
1 ¾ cups sliced fresh strawberries
6 ounces low-fat strawberry yogurt

Preparations

1) Heat griddle to 375 F.
2) Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl.
3) In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, vanilla yogurt, water and oil.
4) Pour egg mixture into the flour mixture. Then, stir until moistened.
5) For each pancake, pour slightly less than ¼ cup batter onto the hot griddle. Cook pancakes until bubbly on top (1 to 2 minutes) and dry around the edges. Turn and cook other sides until golden brown (1 to 2 minutes).
6) Top each serving (2 pancakes) with ¼ cup of sliced strawberries and 1 to 2 Tbsp. of strawberry yogurt.

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	260
Total fat	9 g
Protein	9 g
Sodium	390 mg
Carbohydrate	36 g
Dietary fiber	4 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Total sugars	16 g

Source: MyPlate