



Healthy Heart Outlook

STAYING HEALTHY ■ LIVING WELL

WINTER 2011

Don't Skimp on Your "Seven Winks"

Getting the right amount of sleep can help protect against heart attack, angina, and stroke. A study in the journal *Sleep* found that people who got seven hours of sleep a night had the lowest risk for these health problems. Getting just six hours increased the risk slightly and getting just five hours doubled the risk.

But too much sleep can also spell trouble, though sleep

experts aren't sure why. People who got nine hours of sleep or more were more likely to have heart disease or stroke than people who got seven hours.

How Sleep Affects Health

Why is the body so picky about how much sleep it gets? Sleep affects hormones and metabolism. Lack of sleep can lead to high blood pressure and hampers how the body handles

blood glucose. Both problems damage the arteries.

Sweet Dreams

For a good night's sleep, the National Sleep Foundation recommends:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Don't watch TV or read in bed.
- Avoid caffeine, food, and alcohol close to bedtime.



Are You At Risk for Harmful Blood Clots?

Flying to your brother's this winter? Walk or stretch often during your flight. Any flight lasting more than an hour may increase your risk for blood clots. Other risk factors include:

- A stroke, an injury, or another condition that makes it hard for you to move
- Taking hormones, such as birth control
- A family or personal history of clots
- Being obese
- Being older than age 65

Symptoms include swelling, redness, soreness, or a warm spot on your arm or leg. A clot in your lung may cause fainting, coughing, chest pain, or trouble breathing. Seek medical help right away for suspected clots.

To prevent blood clots, keep moving and wear loose-fitting clothing. You should also eat less sodium in your diet to prevent fluid retention. Fluid retention can put you at risk for a blood clot.

Good Health Guidelines

For people with heart disease, it's important to make sure the following tests are kept current and to discuss these topics with your health care provider:

- Having a lipid profile done at least once a year
- Having your blood pressure checked at every office visit
- Screening for diabetes once a year, or every three years if your blood sugar reading is normal
- Reviewing your medications

Talk with your health care provider about ways to:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Manage your weight
- Get regular exercise
- Get help to quit smoking

A CLOSER LOOK

Understand the Lipid Profile Test

Your health care provider probably orders a cholesterol test or lipid profile for you at least every year. These tests are one way of telling how healthy your arteries are. Here's what to aim for:

Total cholesterol	Lower than 200 mg/dl
LDL ("bad") cholesterol	Less than 100 mg/dl
HDL ("good") cholesterol	50 mg/dl or higher for women 40 mg/dl or higher for men
Triglycerides	Lower than 150 mg/dl

Although these are suggested guidelines for care, please check with your benefits plan for coverage.

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Taming Prescription Medication Costs

About one-third of people ages 45 to 64 take three or more prescription medicines. But times are tough, and drug costs can make a dent in your pocketbook. Below are three ways to safely manage prescription medicine costs.



1. Don't Stop Taking Your Medicine

Suddenly stopping a medicine or taking less than you are supposed to, can harm your health—even if you don't feel any different.

2. Talk with Your Doctor

Let your doctor know you are worried about the cost. He or she may be able to prescribe a generic or less costly medicine. Sometimes your doctor can prescribe higher-dose pills and you can split the pills to get the dose you need. But according to the Food and Drug Administration, not all pills can be safely split. For instance, sustained or timed-release tablets shouldn't be cut. Talk with your doctor about what's best for you.

3. Get Help with Medicine Costs

Several programs can help cover the cost of medicine. These programs include:

- **Medicare Part D.** If you're covered by the government's Medicare program, you are eligible for Medicare prescription drug coverage. Call **1-800-MEDICAR (1-800-633-4227)** or visit **www.medicare.gov**.
- **Medicare Extra Help Program.** If you already have Medicare Part D and your resources and annual income are limited, you may qualify for

this program. It helps with prescription drug copayments and Medicare premiums. For information, call Social Security **(1-800-772-1213)**.

- **State Medicare Savings Program.**

Some states offer additional help with Medicare expenses. For information, call **1-800-MEDICAR (1-800-633-4227)** or visit **www.medicare.gov**.

- **Pharmacy assistance programs.** Many pharmaceutical companies offer free or low-cost medications. To find out if you qualify for help, contact the Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPA) at **1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669)** or visit **www.pparx.org**. It will be helpful to know your income and the name and dose of your medicine.

The PPA can also help you contact Medicare and your state's Medicare Savings Program. Its services are free and confidential.

If you're concerned about medicine costs, talk with your doctor or pharmacist. Or contact the programs listed above. It's worth the effort to get extra help in keeping you healthy.



How to Cope with Angina

If your doctor has told you that you have angina, you know too well what it feels like—that squeezing, pressing pain under your breastbone. You may even feel it in your arm, jaw, shoulder, back, or neck.

Angina is the pain you feel when your heart doesn't get enough oxygen-rich blood, which it needs to keep pumping. You may feel it during certain activities, such as walking or cleaning, or when you are upset. Extreme temperatures, heavy meals, alcohol, and smoke can also trigger angina.

Stable and Unstable Angina

The two most common forms of angina are stable and unstable angina. If the pain is predictable and only happens during certain activities, such as exercise, it's called stable angina. The pain usually goes away after resting or taking prescribed medication.

But if angina pain doesn't stick to a pattern, becomes more severe or frequent, or lasts longer, the problem is unstable

angina. Unstable angina can even happen while resting.

Unstable and stable angina are often symptoms of coronary artery disease (CAD), or narrowed arteries. And CAD puts you at a higher risk for heart attack. Call your doctor if your angina becomes more frequent, lasts longer, or happens without exercise. These warning signs may mean the risk for heart attack is much higher in the days and weeks that follow.

The pain of a heart attack typically is more severe and lasts longer than angina—often longer than 15 to 20 minutes. It does not get better with rest or medicine. In addition, there may be other symptoms, like nausea, sweating, shortness of breath, light-headedness,

and weakness. If you suspect a heart attack, seek immediate emergency help.

Lifestyle Tips

Lifestyle choices can ease angina pain and reduce your heart risks. In some cases, lifestyle choices can have a lasting impact on angina pain and help you lessen the need for surgery. Doctors recommend the following measures:

- Don't smoke.
- Control your high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a healthy, low-fat, low-cholesterol diet. Avoid heavy meals if they trigger your angina.
- Moderate your alcohol intake, if you drink at all.

Are Toning Shoes a Good Substitute for Exercise?

- Exercise, but avoid strenuous activities. However, if your angina is stable, engage in moderate exercise three to four times a week. Your doctor may also recommend cardiac rehabilitation.

Treating the Pain

To help control your angina, your doctor will probably recommend that you take medicines. These can help improve blood flow. Nitroglycerin is one type of medicine used for this. You take it when you feel pain or expect to feel pain—such as before exercise—as your doctor recommends. This drug works by widening blood vessels and helping the heart manage blood flow.

Other medicines can also ease the heart's workload. Beta-blockers lower heart rate and blood pressure, which reduces chest pain. Calcium channel blockers increase blood flow through arteries, which also relieves angina.

Your doctor may also prescribe aspirin, which can help ward off heart attacks and episodes of angina. He or she will prescribe you the proper dose for you.

While medicine helps many people with angina, those with severe angina or who are at high risk for a heart attack may need surgery to improve blood flow and ease chest pain.

Toning shoes—those funny-looking shoes with thick soles—are all the rage. But do they really keep you in shape?

Q. What are toning shoes?

A. They have rounded, uneven soles designed to rock your foot forward. Podiatrists have prescribed them for years for foot and gait problems. Once large shoe companies began marketing them as fitness aids, the shoes skyrocketed in popularity.

Q. What's the claim?

A. Because the soles of toning shoes are unstable, leg muscles work harder to maintain your balance, even when standing. That's supposed to tone your muscles and burn calories with little effort on your part.

Q. What's the truth?

A. A study by the American Council on Exercise found toning shoes didn't help women burn more calories, work leg muscles harder, or improve muscle tone. Women who wore the shoes for eight weeks did better on some, but not all, tests of balance. According to the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine, these shoes are helpful for some people with arthritis of the foot, joint problems, or foot pain.

Q. What are the cons?

A. The shoes can be expensive, costing \$100 or more. But be careful. Unstable soles increase the risk for falls, so people with vertigo or poor balance should avoid them. The shoes may cause tendon, joint, and gait problems.

Q. So, what's the final verdict on toning shoes?

A. If your goal is to get fit or lose weight, toning shoes aren't a magic bullet. You and your wallet may be better off with a regular pair of exercise shoes—just don't forget to add exercise! And be sure to talk with your doctor regarding an exercise program that's right for you.





Angina. This happens when the heart doesn't get enough blood and oxygen. It can feel like pain, squeezing, or pressure in the chest. The pain may also occur in your shoulders, arms, neck, jaw, or back. Angina pain may even feel like indigestion.

Gait. The way you move your body from point to point, like when you walk or run. Some people who have problems with their gait might drag their foot or scrape their toes while walking.

Podiatrist. A doctor who has had special training in how to treat foot and lower leg problems. This type of doctor can also help care for foot issues related to diabetes.

Sustained or timed-release tablets. This is a type of pill that delivers a steady amount of medicine slowly during a period of time. Pain medicine is an example of a sustained medicine.

Overtime May Be Overdoing It

All work and no play could be bad for the heart. That's what an 11-year study of more than 6,000 adults found. Published in the *European Heart Journal*, the study reported that people who worked three to four overtime hours a day were 60 percent more likely to get angina or have a heart attack than people with no overtime hours.

What's the connection? Half of the people who racked up daily overtime hours had a strong Type A behavior pattern. That is, they were high achievers, aggressive, and irritable. This behavior pattern has been linked to risk for heart disease. Working overtime may also leave too little time to unwind after work. And work-related stress—including on-the-job stress, losing your job, or worrying you'll be laid off—can lead to problems with weight, cholesterol, and blood pressure.

Better Balance

One in three Americans reports he or she is under too much stress. If that describes you, try these suggestions from the American Psychological Association:

- **Identify what's causing you stress.** Is it finances, a difficult relationship, or problems at work?
- **Identify your stress signals.** Everyone experiences stress differently. Learn how you respond to stress. Do you feel angry or irritable? Do you get headaches or muscle tension?

Don't Ignore Your Stress Signals

Instead of stress controlling your life, take action!

- **Forget about being perfect.** You don't have to fix every problem at once. Instead, choose one new habit or goal to work toward.
- **Talk with family or friends.** Their support will help.
- **Learn to say no.** If your schedule is too packed, delegate chores. Eliminate the "shoulds" that you don't have to do.
- **Make time for yourself every day.** Even 10 minutes spent doing something just for you makes a difference. You might listen to music, meditate, or take a stroll.



For more help coping with stress, talk with your doctor or ask for a referral to a therapist. When you recognize and handle stress in healthy ways, you help protect your heart.

Protect Your Heart with a Low-Fat Diet

Foods high in certain fats—in particular saturated and trans fats—can increase your blood cholesterol. High blood cholesterol can make you more likely to suffer heart disease or a heart attack.

Eat Plenty Of:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grain products—rice, pasta, cereals, and breads
- Fat-free and low-fat milk products
- Legumes—beans and lentils
- Skinless poultry
- Fish—like salmon
- Lean meat, especially cuts

marked loin or round

- Healthy unsaturated fats like those found in nuts, seeds, avocado, or oils like olive oil in small amounts

Limit or Avoid:

- Gravy, rich sauces, creamy salad dressings, and regular mayonnaise
- Cookies, crackers, doughnuts, potato chips, and cakes
- Fried foods, such as french fries
- Whole-milk products, including cream, milk, and cheeses
- Egg yolks
- Sausages and hot dogs



Amish Potatoes with Lima Beans

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 6 large potatoes
- 2 tsp. canola oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 10-oz. package frozen baby lima beans, thawed
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Parsley
- Paprika

Directions

1. Bake or microwave potatoes in their skins until tender but still firm. When cool enough to handle, peel and cut potatoes into large cubes.
2. Heat oil in an extra-wide skillet or stir-fry pan. Add onion and sauté over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring every 2 or 3 minutes.
3. Stir in potatoes and lima beans and continue to sauté for another 5 minutes or so, or until potatoes are golden and lima beans are tender.
4. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then transfer to a serving dish. Sprinkle the top with parsley and paprika and serve.

Nutrition Information

Each serving contains approximately 250 calories, 6.5 g protein, 5 g fat, no cholesterol, 46 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber, 45 mg sodium

Make food trades that cut fat and cholesterol

Instead of...	Use or Have...
one whole egg in a recipe	2 egg whites
a hot dog or sausage	a regular-size hamburger made with lean meat. Hold the mayo.
french fries	a baked potato with a little reduced-fat margarine or low-fat sour cream
extra cheese on a pizza	extra vegetables on your pizza
cheesecake or ice cream	fresh fruit, sherbet, sorbet, or low-fat frozen yogurt

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