

A Healthier Heart Starts Here

Simple Steps to Protect
Your Heart Every Day





Why is Heart Health Important?

Your heart plays a big role in how you feel every day. Taking care of it helps you stay active and independent, feeling your best as you age.

Your heart is a muscle that pumps blood through your body. This blood carries oxygen and nutrients that help your body work the way it should. As we get older, the heart often has to work harder, especially if we have conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes.

Keeping your heart healthy supports your whole body. When the heart isn't working well, it can affect your energy, breathing, balance, and ability to stay independent.



TIP: Heart health affects more than just your chest. It supports your brain, kidneys, muscles, and circulation.

Common Heart Conditions & Symptoms

Many heart conditions are common as we age. Knowing what they are and what signs to watch for can help you take action early.

Common Heart Conditions in Older Adults

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Heart disease
- Irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia)
- History of heart attack or stroke

Common Symptoms to Watch For

- Shortness of breath
- Chest discomfort or pressure
- Swelling in the legs, ankles, or feet
- Feeling tired more than usual
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Irregular or fast heartbeat

If you notice any of these symptoms, talk to your doctor.



Why Heart Health Matters

Your heart supports nearly everything your body does. Taking care of it helps you feel better today and stay independent as you age.

Why does heart health affect so many parts of my body?

Your heart pumps blood that carries oxygen and nutrients to your brain, kidneys, muscles, and other organs. When your heart works well, your whole body works better. When it struggles, you may feel tired, short of breath, or unsteady.

Can small habits really make a difference at my age?

Absolutely. Even small daily habits like taking medications as prescribed, moving your body, or choosing heart-healthy foods can help lower your risk of heart attack or stroke and improve how you feel day to day.

Is it normal for heart health to change as I get older?

Yes. As we age, the heart may need to work harder, especially if you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or a history of heart problems. These changes are common and manageable with the right care and habits.

What happens if heart problems aren't caught early?

When heart issues go unnoticed, they can slowly affect your energy, breathing, balance, and independence. That's why regular check-ins with your doctor and paying attention to changes in how you feel are so important.



TIP: You don't have to change everything at once. One or two small steps can still make a meaningful difference for your heart.

Spot the Signs When Your Heart is Under Stress

Your body often gives warning signs when your heart is under stress. Learning to recognize them early can help prevent serious problems.

Warning Signs That Need Attention



**Chest pain
or pressure**



**Fast, slow or
irregular heartbeat**



**Trouble
breathing**



**Sudden weakness
or confusion**



**Sudden swelling
in the legs or feet**

What You Can Do

- Sit down and rest
- Check your blood pressure if you track it at home
- Take medications as prescribed
- Call your doctor if symptoms don't improve



EMERGENCY TIP:
**Chest pain, trouble breathing, or signs of
stroke are emergencies. Call 911 right away.**

Your Care Team is Your Partner

Heart health is not something you have to manage alone.

Managing your heart health works best when you have a care team you trust. Your care team helps you:



Monitor your blood pressure and heart health



Catch small changes early



Review medications and answer questions



Support your overall well-being

Seeing your doctor regularly helps keep your heart on track and helps you feel more confident about your care.

When to Call Your Doctor

It's always okay to call your doctor if something doesn't feel right.

Call your doctor if:

- Your blood pressure stays higher or lower than your target
- You notice swelling that doesn't go away
- You feel more tired or short of breath than usual
- You have dizziness or fainting
- Your heartbeat feels irregular

It's always better to call early than to wait.



Small Steps for a Stronger Heart

Taking care of your heart doesn't require big changes. Small, consistent steps make the biggest difference.



Take Your Medications

- Take heart and blood pressure medicines as prescribed
- Use reminders or pill organizers
- Talk to your doctor about side effects or cost concerns



Eat Heart-Healthy Foods

- More fruits and vegetables
- Lean proteins
- Whole grains
- Less salt and fried foods



Stay Active

- Aim for about 30 minutes most days
- Walking, chair exercises, stretching, or water exercise all count
- Consistency matters more than intensity



Manage Stress

- Take time to relax
- Stay connected with friends or family
- Practice deep breathing or quiet moments

Simple Food Swaps for a Healthier Heart

Eating for heart health doesn't mean giving up foods you enjoy. It's about making small, smart swaps that support your heart while keeping meals satisfying. Small choices, made often, add up over time.



Swap salty snacks for fresh fruit or unsalted nuts.

Salty foods can raise blood pressure and make your heart work harder. Choosing fresh fruit, yogurt, or unsalted nuts helps reduce extra sodium while still keeping snacks enjoyable.



Swap fried foods for baked, grilled, or air-fried options.

Fried foods are often high in unhealthy fats that can raise cholesterol. Baking, grilling, or air-frying keeps flavor while being gentler on your heart.



Swap sugary drinks for water or unsweetened tea.

Sugary drinks can add extra strain to your heart. Water, sparkling water, or unsweetened tea help keep you hydrated without added sugar.



Swap white bread or rice for whole-grain options.

Whole grains contain fiber that supports heart health and helps you feel full longer. Try whole-grain bread, brown rice, or oatmeal when possible.



Use smaller plates to help manage portions.

Using a smaller plate can make it easier to enjoy balanced portions without feeling restricted. Aim to fill half your plate with vegetables, a quarter with lean protein, and a quarter with whole grains.



TIP: Reading food labels can help you spot hidden sodium and added sugars. Your care team can help you learn what to look for.

Helpful Tools to Support Your Heart Health

The right tools can make heart-healthy habits easier to manage and easier to stick with. You don't need technology to be perfect, just helpful.



Home Blood Pressure Monitor

Tracking your blood pressure at home helps you notice patterns and share accurate information with your doctor during visits.



Medication Reminder Apps

Apps like Medisafe can remind you when it's time to take medications and help you stay on schedule, even on busy days.



Walking and Movement Apps

Apps designed for older adults, such as SilverSneakers GO (included with many Medicare Advantage plans), offer guided exercises, walking programs, and gentle strength routines you can do at your own pace.



Simple Tracking Options

Paper logs or basic notes on your phone can help you track blood pressure, activity, or how you're feeling. Bring them to appointments so your care team can see what's working.



TIP: Start with one tool that feels manageable. Once it becomes part of your routine, you can add another if it helps. The goal isn't perfection, it's progress.

Support and Prevention

Heart health is about your whole life, not just numbers on a chart. How you eat, move, rest, and stay connected all play a role in keeping your heart strong.

Whole-Person Care

Taking care of your heart means caring for your whole self. Your daily habits, emotional well-being, and support system all work together to protect your heart and help you feel your best.

You're Not Alone

You don't have to manage heart health on your own. Support is available every step of the way, including:

- Your doctor and care team
- Family members and friends
- Social workers and center staff
- Community programs that offer meals, exercise, transportation, and social connection

Living well with heart health is possible when you have the right support around you. Seeing your doctor regularly helps catch small changes early — before they become bigger concerns — and gives you confidence in your care.

Take the Next Step Toward a Healthier Heart

Small steps today can make a meaningful difference over time.

- Talk to your doctor about your heart health.
- Visit **chenmedicalcenters.com** or call **(844) 892-2273** to learn more about how our care teams can support you.
- Ask about regular check-ins to stay on track

Every step counts. With the right care, support, and habits, protecting your heart is not only possible, it's within reach.