



# GLOBAL HEALTH PHARMACY

## ASK YOUR GLOBAL HEALTH PHARMACY

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### HEALTHY HEART HABITS: LIFE'S SIMPLE 7

As you started the New Year, did you resolve to have healthier habits? Many people do. But a long-term study found that Americans are not doing as well as they were 20 years ago in maintaining a heart-healthy lifestyle. And this increases their chances of having a heart attack, stroke, or heart disease.

#### **LIFE'S SIMPLE 7:**

In the study, the percent of Americans who met all these heart healthy lifestyle goals – what the American Heart Association calls Life's Simple 7 – dropped from 8.5 percent to 5.8 percent.

- 1) Eat a balanced diet
- 2) Be active
- 3) Manage your weight
- 4) Don't use tobacco
- 5) Maintain ideal levels of blood sugar
- 6) Maintain ideal levels of cholesterol
- 7) Maintain ideal levels of blood pressure
- 8)

#### **BEST FOR WOMEN:**

In the past, it was thought that hormones protected women from heart disease until menopause. Now we know that's not the case. But two recent studies show that there may be subtle differences in what's best for women and men.

In one study, women who followed these six habits cut their risk of heart attack by a whopping 92 percent.

- 1) Don't smoke.
- 2) Maintain a normal body mass index (BMI)
- 3) Exercise – moderately to vigorously – at least 2.5 hours a week
- 4) Watch no more than seven hours of TV each week
- 5) Drink no more than one alcoholic beverage each day
- 6) Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fish or omega-3 fatty acids
- 7) Limit sugary drinks, processed and red meats, trans fats, and sodium. Even women who adopted just one or two of these healthy habits lowered their heart risk, with a normal BMI having the greatest impact.



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## **BEST FOR MEN:**

A Swedish study tracked 20,000 men and found that men with the following habits cut their risk of heart attack by 86 percent:

- 1) Don't smoke
- 2) Eat a healthy diet
- 3) Drink no more than two alcoholic drinks a day
- 4) Stay physically active, for example, walking or cycling at least 40 minutes a day
- 5) Maintain a waist circumference of less than 37 inches.

For men, healthy diet and moderate drinking appeared to have the most impact on reducing their heart risks.

## **KNOW YOUR NUMBERS:**

So where should you begin? One place to start is to know your numbers. That includes blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure – as well as you weight. The next step is to talk with your doctor or Global Health Pharmacist about ways to improve.

Global Health Pharmacy Pharmacists can also give you tips on tracking – and improving – these critical numbers. For example, if you want to track you blood pressure at home, a Global Health Pharmacist will advise you on how best to do so. Remember - high blood pressure is a “silent killer,” so the only way to know whether or not it’s lurking is to check it.

In fact, nearly 30 percent of Americans have high blood pressure, and nearly half of these Americans don't have it under control with either lifestyle habits or medication. If your doctor has prescribed blood pressure medication, be sure to take it. For some people, that’s the only way to keep their blood pressure at bay.

*Nothing herein constitutes medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or is a substitute for professional advice. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other medical professional if you have questions or concerns about a medical condition.*

## **References:**

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