6 Ways to improve odds and beat Heart Disease
You can dramatically reduce your chances of having heart disease or dying from heart disease if you do six simple things.

That’s what a new study in recent edition of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology found.
And it’s good news since studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that heart disease is the leading cause of death for American women and men.

February is heart Month.

This latest study used data came from 88,940 women between age 27 and 44 enrolled in the Nurses’ Health Study II from 1991 to 2011. The study looked at how many women smoked (or quit), what their body mass index was, what their physical activity level was, how much they watched TV and what their diet was like.

In 20 years of follow-up, there were 456 cases of coronary heart disease.

Researchers noticed that of the women who didn’t have coronary heart disease and stayed healthy, the greater majority had six lifestyle habits in common. So, here is what you need to do. And while women were studied in this case, these habits would be good for men’s heart, too.

Don’t smoke, or stop smoking - Smoking doesn’t just hurt your lungs and age your skin prematurely, it also hurts your heart. In fact, nearly as many smokers die of heart disease as they do from lung cancer. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. The chemicals in cigarettes cause physical damage to your heart, and they mess with your blood cells. There’s a reason the Whole Health Organization calls smoking the gradual killer. Smoking can cause plaque to buildup in your heart. That plaque narrows your arteries, making it hard for the blood to circulate. Have too much plaque, and you’ve got coronary heart disease. If you don’t smoke, don’t start. If you do smoke, ask for help. Only about 40% of people able to quit without counseling or medicine, according to the American Cancer Society.
Get your BMI in check - Body mass index looks at your height and weight to measure how much fat you have. Researchers determined that optimal BMI was 18.5 to 24.9, which scientists typically characterize as normal weight. A normal weight is probably a stretch for most Americans. The average BMI is 26.5 for women, according to CDC.

Exercise, even just 2.5 hours a week. These women weren’t in an hour-long exercise class every day. They exercised at least 2.5 hours a week. That’s less time than most people spend in the shower each week. It’s not a high bar, but the study found even a small amount of physical activity made a real difference. What counts as moderate-to-vigorous-intensity exercise? It means walking at a moderate or brisk pace, backpacking, hiking, bicycling, doing yoga, boxing, tennis or most any team sport. So get out there and get physical.

Keep a healthy diet A “healthy” diet was based on the Alternative Healthy Eating Index.

What does that mean for you?

If you are active, you can eat about 2,200 calories a day and maintain your weight and still be considered healthy. If you exercise sometimes, try 2,000. If you have chosen to sit in front of the TV most nights, keep your diet to 1,800 calories. It’s not just about counting calories, though. You should be eating a balance of food from all the major food groups.

If it’s been a while since you stared at one of those food posters in health class that means:

Eat 2 ½ cups a day of vegetables, cooked or raw, or salads.

Eat two cups of fruit, raw or cooked. Or it can come in the form of a cup or juice if it is 100% fruit juice, rather than some sugary substitute your kids love.

Eat 6 ounces of grains. That could mean half a cup of rice or pasta or a slice of bread.

Eat three cups of dairy. It could be yogurt, 2 ounce of cheese, or drink a cup of milk or soy milk.

Eat 5 ½ ounces of protein. That means seafood or nuts or beans or peas. Lean meat or eggs or poultry work, too.

Repeat daily

It may sound like a lot, but the good news is that your menu would have variety and give you a lot of options for meals. You’re not stuck eating only grapefruit or doing some crazy diet.
Watch a limited amount of television that guideline is painful for someone
who works for a TV company, but the good news is you don’t have to give up
“scandal” and “Downtown Abbey completely. Limited TV is estimated at
about 7 hours a week or less. Earlier studies have found people who watch
more than seven hours of TV tend to sleep less and weigh more. Sitting for
long periods disrupts your metabolism. Too much sitting may kill you. So, if
you are going to watch television, at least do it standing or exercise a bit while
watching.

Drink alcohol, but in moderation yes, you read that correctly. The women
who avoided heart disease drank alcohol. The key, of course, is to be
moderate about it. That was defined as about one drink a day for a non-
pregnant women. Earlier studies have shown that women who do drink in
moderation have a better chance than nondrinker of staying healthy as they
age. Moderate drinking can reduce inflammation, promote healthy cholesterol
levels, improve insulin resistance and help blood vessels function properly.
The CDC suggests that you shouldn’t start drinking for the health impact if you don’t already. There are a
lot of extra calories in alcohol.

Final advice
The other takeaway is that you should start doing one (or all) of these things while you are still young,
long before you may show signs that could be heart sick.
People in their 30s and 40s often feel invincible and don’t contact your doctor or your child’s doctor right
away, Glatt says. Tell them what you see so they can take proper precautions. They need to worry about
heart disease, but that’s not the case. We saw plenty of cases of heart disease in that category, not a huge
number, but women did develop risks.
These are simple things women can do to avoid going in that direction.

Source: http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/05/health/feat-healthy-heart-habits

5 ways to fat-proof your home, no willpower necessary

Think you’re immune to temptation? Let’s be honest: Even the most disciplined healthy eater will
occasionally give in to “runger” (running hunger). One
minute you’re walking past a box of granola sitting on
the kitchen counter; five minutes and 500 calories later,
you probably wish you’d hidden that box in a cabinet
instead.

Who knew you could make weight loss more effortless,
just by doing a little strategizing? Try these easy tricks
to get started.
How to lose weight if you’re short on willpower

1. **Put fresh fruit on the counter** Make it a rule that it’s the only thing allowed on there.

2. **Serve meals strategically** Here’s how to survive dinner with your diet intact: Serve an appetizer— as long as it’s a salad or grilled veggies. They’ll fill you up, so you’ll eat fewer high-calories foods throughout the rest of the meal. Serve your appetizer course at the table, but then sit back and ask your family to help serve themselves to more food in the kitchen. Don’t put main dish or starches in the middle of the table because people are too prone to [eat] seconds or thirds. The trick decreased the amount of food eaten by 30% for men and 10% for women.

3. **Skillfully stock your fridge** It’s not enough to make sure you’ve got healthy food in your fridge. How it’s displayed matters, too. First eaten, first seen. Keep precut fruits and veggies in clear containers in the middle of the fridge and at eye level so you consider eating them every time you open the door.

4. **Buy smaller dishes** The jug-sized wine glasses you just bought may be fun, but they’re making your 5-ounce serving of Merlot look like just a swig. Smaller is better for dishes, too.

5. **Make single servings easy to grab** Even healthy snacks can go awry: We all know it can be tough to eat only a few nuts when you have the whole jar in front of you. Divvy up that supersized tub of cashews into single-portion packs to avoid accidentally downing a gazillion calories worth of your favorite nut. Interestingly, the same tactic can increase your consumption of healthy, low-calorie fruits when snacking.


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**Measles outbreak: Different states, different rules on vaccinations**

Every state requires vaccinations, and every state also allows exemptions for medical reasons, such as if a child has a weakened immune system. That’s where the consensus ends. In many states, parents have two other ways they can avoid vaccinating children: religious and philosophical. The vast majority of the country, 48 states, allows religious exemptions, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.
Measles outbreak: how bad can it be?

And 20 of those states also allow philosophical exemptions “for those who object to immunizations because of personal, moral or other beliefs.

The two states with the strictest vaccine requirements? Mississippi and West Virginia, which don’t allow religious or philosophical exemptions.

The affected states
California, the epicenter of the current outbreak, allows exemptions for medical reasons and “personal beliefs.” And parents have been using them.

During the last school year, 33% of California kindergarteners - about 18,200 - were allowed to skip vaccinations, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The vast majority of exemptions were due to personal beliefs.

Schools should maintain an up-to-date list of pupils with exemptions, so they can be excluded quickly if an outbreak occurs, “the California Department of Public Health said.

But the number of measles cases in California over the past month - 92 - is higher than the median numbers cases for the entire country for each year between 2001 and 2011, according to CDC figures.

Arizona is the next hardest-hit state, with at least seven measles cases already this year. Nearly 5% of Arizona kindergartners were able to skip vaccinations last school year due to medical reasons or, more commonly, their parent’s personal beliefs.

New York and Utah each has at least three measles cases this year. New York allows religious exemptions, but not philosophical ones; Utah allows both.

Overall, about 94.7% of kindergartners across the country last year were vaccinated against measles, according to the CDC.

Mississippi and West Virginia, the two states that allow only medical exemptions to vaccination, have had no measles cases this year.

An incredibly contagious disease

Before the measles vaccine was introduced in 1960s, many children came down with disease by the age 15. About 3 million to 4 million people got the measles each year in the United States. Among them, about 500 people a year died, and 4,000 developed encephalitis, or brain swelling.

Since then, the disease has largely disappeared in the United States. But international travel has spurred sporadic outbreaks in recent years.
Many of the recent measles victims are part of “a large, ongoing multi-state outbreak” to Disneyland in California, the CDC said.

The disease is extremely contagious for several reasons:

An infected person can spread it for four days before developing a rash.
90% of people who are not immune and are close to someone with measles will also get infected.

The virus is airborne.

It can also live on infected surfaces for up to two hours.

**Most, but not all, doctors agree**

The overwhelming sentiment from the medical community is that the measles vaccine is safe and effective.

*Source: [http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/03/health/measles-stContact your doctor or your child's doctor right away. Glatt says. Tell them what you see so they can take proper precautionsate-rules](http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/03/health/measles-stContact your doctor or your child's doctor right away. Glatt says. Tell them what you see so they can take proper precautionsate-rules)*

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**Measles at Disneyland: What You Should Know**

United States measles cases in 2014 hit a record number since 2000 declaration, according to the CDC---644 cases were reported in 27 states.

**How can measles spread, and does it spread easily?**

You can catch it by anyone who has measles. The virus lives in the nose and throat mucus of the person affected, according to the CDC. When the infected person coughs or sneezes, the virus can be spread.

The virus is capable of living for up to 2 hours on a surface or in airspace, the CDC says. When others touch an infected surface, then touch their mouth, nose, or eyes—or, when they breathe the air with the virus—it can spread and an infection can happen.

Measles is highly infectious. According to CDC estimates, 90% of those who aren’t immune to the measles virus and are close to an infected person will also get measles.

**What are the first symptoms and how quickly do they usually show up?**

Typically, people infected have a fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes. Within a few days, the hallmark red rash usually appears, usually first on the face. It then can spread to the rest of the body.

According to the CDC, those infected can spread measles from 4 days before to 4 days after the rash first appears.
What are the complications?
Diarrhea and ear infections can happen, according to the CDC. The infections can lead to hearing loss, pneumonia and swelling of the brain are other potential complications.
About 1 or 2 of every 1,000 children with measles will die of it, the CDC estimates.

How do you prevent measles?
There’s only one way to prevent it. Vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate. He blames the anti-vaccine movement in the U.S., with parents refusing to vaccinate their children, for current outbreaks. You really should not be allowing your children to go to school if they are not vaccinated.

Two doses of measles-containing vaccine, or MMR, provides more than 99% effectiveness in preventing measles, according to the California Department of Public Health. It also protects against mumps and rubella, or German measles.
The first dose is usually given at 12 months old, and a second before kindergarten.
The American Academy of Pediatrics is urging parents to vaccinate their children against measles.

If you think you’ve been exposed to measles and haven’t been vaccinated, can you still get the vaccine?
Yes, according to Kathleen Harriman, PhD, MPH, RN. She's the chief of the vaccine preventable disease epidemiology section at the California Department of Public Health.

MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) is one of our post-exposure vaccines, but it has to be given within 72 hours of exposure to be effective. You can also receive immunoglobulin. It can be given up to six days after exposure.

Those measures may provide some protection or change the course of the disease, according to the CDC.

What should you do if you think you notice the first symptoms?
Contact your doctor or your child's doctor right away. Tell them what you see so they can take proper precautions.