

TIPS TO IMPROVE **HEART HEALTH FOR WOMEN**

BY FRANCES SWIECKI, RN,BSN,MSN,ANP-C

Follow these 10 steps to stay heart-healthy, and prevent heart attack and stroke.

Frances Swiecki is a cardiac clinic stress test administrator at Upstate.

1 Lower saturated fats and cholesterol foods.

For example, avoid white bread and processed foods as these typically contain large amounts of sodium and can cause fluid retention. Decrease salt and sugar intake, and use portion control. Increase "good fats," such as almonds, avocados, fish and lean meats. Turn to whole grain foods, such as wheat bread and oatmeal. These foods can help decrease inflammation and assist with hunger control.

2 Curb your risk for heart disease with exercise and weight reduction.

What is your Body Mass Index? Learn your number using your height and weight. Exercise dilates blood vessel and makes them more pliable for increase blood flow. Grab your sneakers and walk - this is a great way to start. Note: many employers offer fitness programs.

3 Attempt to decrease stressors in your life.

4 Limit alcohol intake.

Many drinks can be high in sugar and calories.



5 Know your cholesterol numbers and blood pressure reading.

Treatment at an early stage can help ward off future problems.

6 Smoking cessation.

Nicotine causes constriction in blood flow to vessels. Many aides are now available to help in this process. Check with your employer as many offer smoking cessation programs.

7 Women's presentation of symptoms for heart attack may be different than men.

Angina symptoms include fatigue, upper back pain, jaw or neck discomfort, and toothache.

8 Is there a family history for heart disease?

While individuals may not have risk factors, genetics can play a role in the risk of developing heart disease.

9 If you are diabetic, maintain glucose control.

Elevated blood sugar causes blood vessel inflammation.

10 Consult with your medical professional before starting any exercise program or diet, and discuss what areas of your health need to be improved.

CALL FOR FREE, FRIENDLY HEALTH ADVICE 24/7.
315-464-2756. JOIN THE UPSTATE WOMEN'S
HEALTH NETWORK FOR INVITES TO EVENTS,
CUSTOM E-NEWSLETTERS AND MORE:
www.upstate.edu/women

