



8 Ways to Take Control of Your Cardiovascular Health With Diet and Exercise



Commissioned by Rick Whittington Consulting on Behalf of Chase Medical Research

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Introduction

There are many different reasons you might want to learn how to take control of your cardiovascular health through diet and exercise.

Perhaps you're overwhelmed by all of your medication and doctor's appointments. Perhaps you're in pain, and you're willing to try anything. Or perhaps you're just sick and tired of feeling sick and tired.

It can be frustrating to find out that your diet can contribute to your cardiovascular risks. However, it can also be incredibly empowering. It means that you are in complete control of the steps you can take for better cardiovascular health. Your potential for feeling great and doing the things you love to do is endless.

The interplay between our bodies, our diet, and our health can be complicated and involve many different physical processes such as hormones, genetics, and our environment. But that's what the Chase Medical Research team is here for.

At Chase, we understand the science to help *you* understand what to do with your diet. Read on to find out how diet and cardiovascular health are related and what you can do to improve your cardiovascular health today. .

Start reading, start changing... and start living the life you deserve!

Disclaimer

This white paper is written for entertainment and information purposes only. It should not replace a consultation with your medical practitioner or be construed as medical advice.

Diet and Cardiovascular Health Are Intimately Connected

What Could Your Diet Really Do For Your Health?

Can what you eat for lunch really affect your body all that much? The answer may surprise you because it is a resounding yes.

What you eat can have a profound impact on how your body functions and the diseases to which you are susceptible. A poor diet and obesity can lead to any number of complications such as the following:

- Morbid Obesity
- Cardiovascular disease
- Hypertension
- Hyperlipidemia (increased cholesterol and lipids)
- Coronary artery disease
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Diabetes

- Coronary Artery Disease
- Metabolic syndrome
- Sleep apnea which leads to Hypertension, Heart Attack, Arrhythmia, and Diabetes

The specific functions of how and why a poor diet and obesity cause these diseases isn't fully understood, but each of these complications is a warning sign that you need to actively monitor your health and modify your diet and activity level.

But the good news is that controlling your diet and exercise level can help you reduce or eliminate each of these diseases.

How Cardiovascular Health Impacts Your Life

Of course, we don't need to tell you that cardiovascular disease is uncomfortable, painful, and life threatening. But it's important to understand how and why your cardiovascular health can break down, including diseases and conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease.

Hypertension

The most common cardiovascular condition is hypertension, or high blood pressure. Hypertension is a medical condition in which you have elevated blood pressure over a set period of time.

While you may or may not have any symptoms, chronic high blood pressure can do a lot of damage to your body over time. It can cause fatigue and difficulty sleeping, and also lead to a need for daily medication and monitoring of your blood pressure.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a disorder of how your body uses and responds to blood sugar. Unfortunately, the risk of Diabetes recently skyrocketed into an epidemic in both old and young people.

Type 2 Diabetes occurs in individuals over 35. Type 1 Diabetes generally occurs in younger people. Type 2 Diabetes was incredibly rare in adolescents, but due to long-term dietary problems it is now becoming more common. Symptoms of diabetes include rapid weight loss, frequent thirst, and blurred vision, and can lead to much more serious and life threatening disorders.

Heart Disease

Heart disease describes a number of conditions that affect the heart such as coronary artery disease, arrhythmia, and congenital heart defects. While it is still the number one cause of death in the United States, it has, fortunately, decreased dramatically over the past five years due to improved eating and lifestyle recommendations and new pharmaceutical options.

If you're developing heart disease, you may experience shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness, potential strokes, headaches, and fatigue.

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Comment [1]: CALLOUT: Metabolic syndrome

If you have any three of the following risk factors, you are suffering from metabolic syndrome:

- + a large waistline
- + high triglyceride level
- + low HDL cholesterol level
- + high blood pressure
- + high fasting blood sugar

If these symptoms describe you, bring this topic up with your doctor to discuss treatments.

Alleviating and Reducing Symptoms with Diet and Exercise

Cardiovascular diseases can feel frightening and overwhelming because it seems like you can't point to any one "cause." This is partially true, because the "cause" is a hundred thousand decisions over the course of several years that eventually leads to damage and inflammation inside your body.

But while a poor diet and limited exercise can cause cardiovascular disease, the opposite is true, too. Taking control of the food you choose to eat and incorporating more physical activity and exercise into your lifestyle can help you take back your health and regain your energy, enthusiasm, and love for life.

The Role of Diet

A proper diet does not mean "calories in and calories out." While the quantity of food you consume is important, it's much more important to consider the quality of the food you eat and the type of food you eat.

A proper diet, in that sense, provides your body with the building blocks it needs to heal and energize itself *without* the food products that confuse it, damage it, or throw it out of whack. When you're eating the right foods for your body, you support several very important processes within your body that work far beyond what you can see.

Proper Proteins, Carbohydrates, Fats, and Sugars

What you eat matters. Which is to say, 100 calories of a packaged treat will have a completely different affect on your body than eating 100 calories of an apple with almond butter. Even though old habits die hard, you can train your body to prefer healthier snacks and foods that will fuel you properly.

Balanced Hormones

When you are overweight, the hormones within your body start to malfunction. This leads to unbalanced insulin, cortisol, and many other hormones. When there is a lot of insulin in your system, your fat cells grow, increasing the amount of fatty tissue in your body, which causes further hormonal disturbances. When you work hard to lose weight by modifying the hormone-triggering foods you eat and exercising regularly, you can regain that hormonal balance and decrease your risk of both heart disease and stroke.

Organ Health

Making poor food choices over time can lead to fat build-up that can impair organ function or cause organ failure. Fueling your body with the right building blocks (and avoiding toxins and toxic doses of chemicals and byproducts in processed food) helps maintain healthy organ function.

The Role of Exercise

We all know that exercise is an important strategy for maintaining a healthy weight. But have you ever heard the specifics about why it's important? Much like your diet, it's not just about "energy expended (exercise) and energy taken in (food)." It's about what happens inside your body before, during, and after you are active.

Balanced Hormones

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Comment [2]: CALLOUT:

Taking control of the food you choose to eat and incorporating more physical activity and exercise into your lifestyle can help you take back your health and regain your energy, enthusiasm, and love for life.

Exercise has a powerful effect on our bodies hormonally. When we exercise, we increase certain hormones that reduce your blood pressure and therefore reduce your risk of heart disease. Exercise encourages your body to wake up and secrete the proper sequence of hormones for enhanced health.

Controlled HDL and LDL

Exercise also offers us a chance to improve our good cholesterol. When you exercise, your body becomes more active in increasing HDL and reducing LDL, working towards bringing your cholesterol levels into the proper range.

Improved Mood

Exercise has a powerful affect on your mood. Just a short 15-minute walk can increase levels of chemical endorphins and cause you to feel more positive, more motivated, and less stressed than you were before you exercised.

Increased Energy

Taking a 15-minute walk might not be your idea of a refreshing break, but in reality it's what your body wants. When you move your body at a low level of activity—even when you're tired— you are reinvigorating your body by encouraging blood flow and muscle development.

Higher-Quality Sleep

Finally, the benefits of physical activity throughout the day will last long into the night. A short walk several times a day can help you enjoy a more restful and restorative night's sleep, which leads to reduced risk of Hypertension, Heart Attack, Arrhythmia, and Diabetes.

There's no argument that lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise are difficult to implement at first. But we encourage you to persevere. Weight loss through diet and exercise can help your body cope with and prevent cardiovascular disease in the long-term, leading to a longer, happier life.

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Comment [3]: CALLOUT: LDL and HDL
LDL and HDL are different types of cholesterol. LDL cholesterol tends to build up plaque in the arteries, while HDL helps to remove LDL build-up.
How bad is bad? Your LDL should be below 100 and your HDL should be above 45 in women and 50 in men.

8 Steps to Better Cardiovascular Health

Congratulations on taking the first difficult step by seeking out information to improve your lifestyle!

It doesn't matter what has driven you to take better care of yourself, whether it's the aging process, an upcoming wedding or high school reunion, or even a chronic or acute health condition that has frightened you.

What matters is that you're ready to make a start.

When you take control of your diet and exercise routine, you can find yourself experiencing a number of exciting benefits:

- Less joint stress or pain, including lessened osteoarthritis
- Better blood sugar control and fewer medical complications
- Reduced risk of certain types of cancer
- Lessened risk of stroke
- Lessened risk of heart disease
- And most importantly: Energy! Energy to do things with your family, your children, and your loved ones. Energy to take back your life and live it!

This section will introduce eight ways that you can take control of your health through diet.

Lifestyle Changes You Can Control

The following lifestyle changes may look and feel overwhelming, but once you adapt to a new set of habits, they will feel quite natural! It's about prioritizing your health and motivating yourself to get over that uncomfortable feeling that comes with changing deeply held habits—making way for a new set of habits that put your health first.

Prioritize Yourself

Do you find yourself struggling to eat meals at appropriate times in appropriate places? Does it just not seem "worth it" to eat better or skip dessert?

Then you need to reset your attitude. Would you send your child to school without eating? Would you continue to feed your child sweets if you knew that it would increase his risk of developing cancer or metabolic syndrome? We didn't think so!

So why not extend that consideration and care to yourself? You're worth it, and if you make yourself a priority now, you will have more energy and more time to spend time with your loved ones.

Eat at Home

Transitioning your meals to your home is the first and most important step you can take. Not only will this allow you to start to see what kinds of foods you purchase and eat, but you will also have more control over the amount of sugar, salt, and carbohydrates you consume. And while it may be uncomfortable and

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Get ready to change your life, one simple step at a time. You'll need:

+ Pen

+ Paper

+ List of recipes or meals your family enjoys

+ Family calendar

+ Grocery coupon flyer

inconvenient at first, the health and stress-lowering benefits you'll receive are incredibly worth it!

Your goal is to eat 90 percent of your meals at home. If this feels overwhelming, start with one meal per day. Then graduate to two meals, then three meals, then all of your meals. Start slow, but don't give up.

Worried about pleasing picky eaters? You don't have to cook two meals to please everyone. Simply build a meal around a few basics and allow each family member to pick and choose different ingredients.

Get Organized

Writing out your meal plan is an excellent way to feel more organized. First, set aside time to select meals for each day of the week and list out the ingredients you'll need to buy at the grocery store.

Make meal planning a special part of the week by including your spouse or children in the meeting. Select meals that are within your dietary needs and that are fun for the whole family to cook to help your children establish good eating habits, too.

Color Your Plate

As you become more comfortable grocery shopping and preparing food, start to look at the quality of the food you buy. Do you still rely on a lot of packaged goods? Are you including enough vegetables in each meal for your family's dietary needs?

Once you're ready to try out new recipes, start to prioritize brightly colored fruits and vegetables. White flour, white bread, and white potatoes might be staples in your kitchen, but they are not the most nutritious options for your family. Replace these foods with nutrient-dense vegetables that include as much color as possible, such as bright red, yellow, purple, and green.

Pack Your Breakfast with Protein

Breakfast is an incredibly important opportunity to fuel your body with foods that will give you energy throughout the day. Aim to eat a good source of protein at breakfast and to avoid carbohydrates from sugars and packaged foods. Great examples of protein-rich breakfasts include protein shakes, hard-boiled eggs, or low-sugar Greek yogurt.

Don't Drink Your Meals

What you eat is important, but so is what you drink. Take a good hard look at the kinds of beverages you consume throughout the week. If you aren't monitoring your consumption, it can be far too easy to drink your way through thousands of calories and grams of sugar!

Drinking your calories in high-sugar, high-carbohydrate beverages like mocha lattes and regular and diet sodas will not give your body enough time to process that sugar or sugar alcohol. This leads to weight gain, hormonal disturbance, blood sugar imbalance, and increased cardiovascular stress.

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Comment [5]: CALLOUT

Make this a special part of the week by including your spouse or children in the meeting. Select meals that are within your dietary needs and that are fun for the whole family to cook to help your children good eating habits, too.

Swap out these habit-forming, unhealthy beverages for healthier options such as the following:

- Instead of a glass of juice, cut 2 ounces of juice with 6 ounces of sparkling water for a low-sugar, fizzy treat.
- Instead of a high-calorie, high-sugar mocha latte, drink regular coffee with just a little creamer.
- Instead of regular or diet soda, choose water to lose weight, hydrate your body, and balance your blood sugar.

Slow Down

Finally, the speed at which you eat is important, too, so practice eating slowly. Make sure you take at least 20 minutes to eat your meals, which is how long it takes your body to release the hormones that let you know you are full.

Take Control of Your Kitchen

Here are a few more ideas that can make these diet and lifestyle changes a little easier:

- Consider batch cooking and freezing meals for those days when you know the calendar will be crunched.
- Use your leftovers to make another meal.
- Make two meals with one common staple, such as chicken or beef.
- If financially viable, have a grocery store deliver your groceries each week.
- Build your meal plans around your grocery store's flyer coupons to stay budget-friendly.
- Set aside 10 minutes each morning and night to mentally prepare for the day's food. (Marinate your meat, remove food to defrost, etc.)
- Assign meal planning and grocery list writing to children as it becomes age-appropriate (Always review their work).

Every family is busy and has things to do – but if you can put in the effort to put your family's health before the other things in life that "pop up," you'll be amazed at how much easier and less stressful the rest of your responsibilities will seem. The reward of planning your meals and eating home is a longer, happier life!

Helpful Tools

Don't worry, you don't have to go it alone! Not only will the team of qualified medical professionals at Chase Medical Research stand behind you, but technology also offers a number of helpful resources and tools to help you navigate this road of diet and exercise.

Here's a list of free tools and applications we recommend to help you monitor and manage your health:

Smartphone Apps

- [MyFitnessPal](#)
- [Calorieking](#)
- [Chronometer](#)
- [Fooducate](#)
- [Locavore](#)
- [Endomondo](#)

Websites and Brochures

- ["How to Read Nutrition Labels,"](#) USDA
- [BMI Calculator,](#) Mayo Clinic
- SSKS Downloadable meal planner