



## AWARENESS

# 5 STEPS TO A HAPPIER HEART

According to the World Heart Federation, “World Heart Day” on the 29th of September is a campaign to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and “...an opportunity for everyone to stop and consider how best to use heart for humanity, for nature, and for you.”

The campaign’s focus includes three pillars that include:

1. awareness and access to treatment for heart disease,
2. combating air pollution, which is responsible for 25% of CVD deaths worldwide, according to the World Heart Federation,
3. and promoting a healthy lifestyle that minimises psychological stress, which enhances heart health.

The experts share five steps to a happier and healthier heart.

### Healthy heart habits

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) claim that “living a healthy lifestyle, you can help keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels normal and lower your risk for heart disease and heart attack.”

The CDC recommend the following healthy habits to maintain a healthy heart and lower the risks associated with cardiovascular disease.

#### 1. Embrace a healthy diet

Include lots of vegetables, fruits, legumes, and nuts into our diet to promote a happy heart.

According to the CDC, limit “...saturated fat and trans fat” which “...may contribute to heart disease.”

In addition, limit salt to lower our blood pressure to maintain cholesterol and sugar to prevent or maintain diabetes.

#### 2. Keep moving your body

Exercise “...can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugar levels,” according to the CDC. The CDC references the Surgeon General of the US, who recommended that adults spend 2 hours and 30 minutes a week on moderate-intensity exercises, such as cycling or brisk walking.

#### 3. Cut out nicotine

Smoking significantly increases our risk of developing heart disease. If you are a smoker, contact a medical professional to assist you in quitting smoking.

#### 4. Lower stress levels

A WebMD article, medically reviewed by cardiologist James Beckerman, states that prolonged unmanaged stress can negatively impact our heart health.

If we form bad habits to manage our stress, like smoking, we increase our risk of heart disease. On the contrary, we can better manage our stress by forming healthy habits, such as relaxation techniques, exercising, and getting enough sleep.

Overall, looking after your heart is essential for your overall well-being. Are you following any of these happy heart habits?