



# WOMEN'S HEALTHY HEART INITIATIVE

## HEART DISEASE IS PREVENTABLE

The facts are sobering. Heart disease is a leading cause of death for women, killing more women than all cancers combined. But there is a silver lining. 80% of premature heart disease is preventable. WHHI's focus is on preventative care precisely because this disease does not need to be as deadly as it is.

Step one is understanding your risk. Currently, 9 in 10 Canadian women have at least one significant risk factor for heart disease. It's time to take our health into our own hands and change that. The American Heart Association has developed 7 simple steps for heart disease prevention that anybody can follow. By understanding and practicing these 7 pillars of good heart health you can begin reducing your risk today.

## LIFE'S SIMPLE 7

### GET ACTIVE

Getting adequate physical activity will increase your length and quality of life. When you don't get enough physical activity, not only does it boost your chances of developing heart disease, it also increases the likelihood of developing other heart disease risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. Regular exercise is the bedrock for good health. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day, five times per week.

### EAT BETTER

A healthy heart relies on healthy eating habits. A well-balanced diet consisting of vegetables, fruit, fiber-rich whole grains and lean meats is one of the best measures you can take to fight heart disease and stay healthy.

### LOSE WEIGHT

If you are overweight you are at a higher risk for health problems such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and diabetes. By maintaining a healthy weight, you reduce the burden on your heart, lungs, blood vessels and skeleton and improve overall health.

### DON'T SMOKE

Cigarette smokers have a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease and smoking is one of the leading causes of preventable death and disease in North America. If you smoke, quitting is the best thing you can do for your health.

### CONTROL CHOLESTEROL

High cholesterol contributes to plaque build-up in your arteries. As the arteries narrow, less oxygen-rich blood reaches your heart, leading to heart disease and stroke. When you control your cholesterol, you are giving your arteries their best chance to remain clear of blockages.

### MANAGE BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. When you keep your blood pressure within healthy ranges, you reduce the strain on your heart, arteries, and kidneys. Because high blood pressure often does not cause symptoms, make sure to ask your doctor about it.

### REDUCE BLOOD SUGAR

Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose (or blood sugar) that our bodies use for energy. Temporary spikes in blood sugar after meals is normal but long-term inconsistencies can damage your heart, kidneys, eyes and nerves.

