



WHAT THE HEALTH

Making UC Riverside a Healthy Place to Study, Work, & Live



Nurturing Your Well-Being: A Journey Within

As we step into the new season, it's the perfect time to embark on a journey toward holistic well-being. In this edition, we bring you a wealth of insights, tips, and inspiration to help you prioritize your mental, physical, and emotional health.

In the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, it's easy to overlook the importance of well-being. Well-being is not a destination but a journey, an ongoing exploration of self-care and personal growth.

Let's begin the journey to bettering our well-being. It's a commitment to ourselves, a promise to nurture the mind, body, and soul, and a celebration of the incredible resilience within each of us. Here's to a life well-lived and well-loved!

IN THIS ISSUE...

**BLOOD PRESSURE: YOUR
VITAL HEALTH INDICATOR**

**CHOLESTEROL: NAVIGATING
THE PATH TO HEART HEALTH**

**SLEEP: MAINTAINING YOUR
HEART HEALTH**

**NUTRITION: A HEARTY-
HEART DIET**

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**STRESS MANAGEMENT:
KEEPING YOUR HEART
HEALTHY**

Blood Pressure: Your Vital Health Indicator



Hypertension or high blood pressure (HBP), as defined by the American Heart Association, is when the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels is consistently too high. Having a consistently elevated blood pressure can put a strain on the heart and blood vessels, which can cause both to weaken and work less efficiently over time. Optimal blood pressure ensures that our organs receive the oxygen and nutrients they need.

Know Your Numbers: A normal/healthy blood pressure reading should be 120/80 mmHG or lower. Regularly monitor your blood pressure. Visit your healthcare provider for a quick assessment and understand your baseline for a healthier you. Make sure to regularly exercise to keep your heart in top shape, limit salt intake and enjoy a balanced, heart-friendly diet, and incorporate stress-relief activities into your routine for emotional well-being. Remember, taking care of your blood pressure is a fundamental step towards a healthier life!

Cholesterol: Navigating the Path to Heart Health

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that circulates in the bloodstream. The primary source of cholesterol is produced endogenously by the liver, but can be found in animal products as well (meat, poultry, dairy, etc.). Cholesterol is not inherently bad. Cholesterol helps the body build cells and produce certain hormones. However, too much cholesterol can lead to several health risks such as stroke and cardiovascular disease.

There are two types of cholesterol: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL). LDL cholesterol is often called the “bad” cholesterol because too much of it can cause plaque build ups in the arteries, which then leads to the narrowing and stiffening of blood vessels. HDL cholesterol, or the “good” cholesterol, helps reduce LDL cholesterol levels in the blood.

LDL cholesterol is increased by...

1. Eating a diet high in saturated and trans fats
2. Smoking and alcohol consumption
3. Sedentary lifestyle
4. Obesity
5. Medical conditions such as metabolic diseases, liver conditions, etc.
6. Genetics

HDL cholesterol is increased by...

1. Omega-3 fatty acids
 - a. Sources include fish, seeds, nuts, vegetables, and vegetable oils such as olive oil.
1. Regular exercise
 - a. Aerobic exercises like swimming and cycling can increase HDL cholesterol



Sleep: Maintaining Your Heart Health

Sleep plays a crucial role in maintaining heart health. Adequate and quality sleep is associated with a lower risk of developing heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular conditions. Lack of sleep or poor sleep quality can lead to various risk factors for heart disease, including:

- **High Blood Pressure:** Poor sleep patterns can disrupt the body's ability to regulate stress hormones, which can lead to an increase in blood pressure. Over time, high blood pressure can strain the heart and increase the risk of heart disease.
- **Inflammation:** Sleep deprivation can lead to increased inflammation in the body, which is linked to heart disease. Chronic inflammation can damage the arteries and lead to atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes.
- **Weight Gain:** Sleep deprivation can disrupt the balance of hormones that regulate appetite, leading to increased hunger and a preference for high-calorie foods. This can contribute to weight gain and obesity, both of which are risk factors for heart disease.
- **Glucose Metabolism:** Poor sleep can affect the body's ability to regulate glucose levels, leading to insulin resistance and an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Diabetes is a significant risk factor for heart disease.
- **Disrupted Heart Rhythm:** Sleep disturbances, such as sleep apnea, can disrupt the normal rhythm of the heart. Sleep apnea, characterized by pauses in breathing during sleep, is associated with an increased risk of hypertension, stroke, and heart failure.

To promote heart health through sleep, it's important to aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night, establish a regular sleep schedule, create a comfortable sleep environment, and practice good sleep hygiene. Additionally, addressing any underlying sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea, can also help improve heart health.



Nutrition: A Hearty-Heart Diet



Nutrition plays a significant role in heart health. A heart-healthy diet typically includes:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** These are high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber, which are good for heart health.
- **Whole Grains:** Whole grains like brown rice, whole wheat bread, and oatmeal provide fiber and nutrients that can help lower your risk of heart disease.
- **Healthy Fats:** Foods rich in healthy fats, such as avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil, can help improve cholesterol levels and lower the risk of heart disease.
- **Fish:** Fatty fish like salmon, trout, and mackerel are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which are beneficial for heart health.
- **Lean Proteins:** Choose lean proteins like poultry, fish, beans, and legumes instead of red meat, which can be high in saturated fats.
- **Limiting Salt:** Consuming too much salt can contribute to high blood pressure, which is a risk factor for heart disease. Aim to limit your sodium intake.
- **Limiting Added Sugars:** Foods and drinks with added sugars can contribute to obesity and other heart disease risk factors. Try to limit your intake of sugary foods and beverages.
- **Moderate Alcohol:** If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. This means up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.
- **Portion Control:** Pay attention to portion sizes to avoid overeating, which can lead to weight gain and other heart disease risk factors.
- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water and limit sugary drinks to stay hydrated without consuming excess calories.

By focusing on these dietary principles, you can help promote heart health and reduce your risk of heart disease. Additionally, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, managing stress, and getting enough sleep are also important factors in maintaining a healthy heart.

Stress Management: Keeping Your Heart Healthy

It is no secret that stress can have a grand impact on your heart health. Over time, chronic stress can strain your cardiovascular system, potentially contributing to the development of heart disease.

- **Hormonal Effects** - When stressed, your body naturally releases hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, temporarily raising both your heart rate and blood pressure.
- **Consequences of Stress** - Stress can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms like overeating, smoking, or excessive drinking, all risk factors for heart disease.
- **Maintaining a Healthy Heart** - Regular exercise, maintaining a healthy diet, and seeking support from friends and family can all help reduce stress levels



Physical Activity

Exercise is a vital component of heart health, but and have other advantages that go well beyond fitness. Those who exercise regularly strengthen their heart muscles, improve circulation and lower their blood pressure and cholesterol. In addition, exercise is a powerful tool for managing weight, lowering stress levels, and improving cardiovascular health. A minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity each week is recommended by the American Heart Association, with at least two days of muscle-strengthening activities added in. Aerobic exercises provide a wide range of choices to fit every taste, from brisk walking to energizing swims, and from bicycle trips to the beat of dancing.

In addition to these exercises, one's fitness journey can be enhanced by bodyweight exercises like push-ups and squats, resistance band workouts, and weightlifting. However, it's important to consult a healthcare professional before starting any new fitness program, especially if you have any pre-existing medical issues. They can provide advice specifically catered to you. By putting consultation and well-informed decision-making first, one can create the conditions for a fulfilling and long-lasting path to excellent heart health.



Heart Health - Upcoming Events



Wellness Program Events

- ComPsych Webinar
 - Addressing Employee Performance Issues in a Supportive Way
 - Thursday, 2/15 @ 11:00am
- 8-week Mindful Minute Series Wellness Campaign
 - Monday, 2/12-Monday, 4/8
 - To sign up, click https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a4zunlYeCpRZqh8
- Walk and Talk event with AVC Alex Najera
 - Thursday, February 22nd 12:15pm – 12:45pm
 - Meet at Scotty the Bear Statue
- FREE Biometric Screenings for Faculty and Staff
 - Thursday, February 22nd 8am-11am / 12pm-3pm
 - Olmsted Plaza

February SRC Events

- Lap Swim and Stay Fit Class
 - Tuesday, February 13th 12pm-2pm
 - \$0 - \$75
- Hour of Power: A Female-Friendly Fitness Group
 - Friday, February 16th 2:30pm-3:30pm
 - Free
- Annie's Canyon Hike
 - Saturday, March 9th 8am-5:30pm
 - \$63-\$70
- Plate and Dates:
 - Friday, February 16th 2pm-4pm
 - SRC Classroom Kitchen
 - Free to UCR Students

