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Blood Pressure and Heart Health

High blood pressure is a significant cardiovascular risk factor – and controlling stress can help control blood pressure. To keep your “ticker” in tip-top shape, it’s important to keep fit, lower stress and eat the right food.

Reduce Stress

Stressed out? You’re not alone. Learn to manage your time better and try to deal with stressful situations before they become drawn out. Boost your social support system and don't be afraid to ask for help. Nurture yourself: learn relaxation techniques and ensure you are getting sufficient, quality sleep.

Heart Rate (RHR)

For some time we've known that a low resting heart rate (RHR - taken upon awakening, before leaving the bed) is associated with a higher level of fitness. Now, a Danish study has found that a high RHR is linked to an elevated risk of cardiovascular death – independent of fitness level. Having an RHR in the 80s doubled the risk and in the 90s tripled the risk.

Typically you can improve your RHR with improved fitness – so get busy!

Red Meat and Heart Disease

Scientists may be getting closer to understanding the connection between red meat and heart disease. Carnitine, a compound found in red meat, is metabolized to TMAO (trimethylamine-N-oxide) in our guts. High levels of TMAO have been associated with increased cardiovascular risk. It seems to make cholesterol "behave badly," sticking to blood vessel walls, leading to damage and making it harder for the liver & intestines to remove it.

Reduce Your Salt Intake

Although our bodies need a small amount of sodium to function well, most North Americans are consuming more than double what's required. Certainly there's salt in chips and canned soups, but it lurks in many other places: breads, pizza, sandwiches, cheese, pasta sauce, etc. Learn to read food labels and aim to bring your daily consumption below 2300mg (1500mg if you're over 50). The good news? You can "un-acquire" your taste for salt!

The cardiovascular system is complex, and new research is improving our understanding of its function and care all the time. To improve your understanding, talk to our pharmacists.