Ten tips for a healthier heart!

#1 Give up smoking
If you're a smoker, quit. It's the single best thing you can do for your heart health. Smoking is one of the main causes of coronary heart disease. A year after giving up, your risk of a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker. Our staff are here to help and support you to quit - it's never too late!

#2 Get active
Getting – and staying – active can reduce your risk of developing heart disease. It can also be a great mood booster and stress buster. The NHS recommend 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week. One way to achieve this target is by doing 30 minutes of activity on 5 days a week. Fit it in where you can, such as by cycling to work and check out our Get Active At Home playlist on YouTube for some great home workouts.

#3 Manage your weight
Being overweight can increase your risk of heart disease. Stick to a healthy, balanced diet low in fat and sugar, with plenty of fruit and vegetables, combined with regular physical activity. Take a look at our Healthy Eating page on our website for ideas and inspiration.

#4 Eat more fibre
Eat plenty of fibre to help lower your risk of heart disease – aim for at least 30g a day. Eat fibre from a variety of sources, such as wholemeal bread, bran, oats and wholegrain cereals, potatoes with their skins on, and plenty of fruit and veg.

#5 Cut down on saturated fat
Eating too many foods that are high in saturated fat can raise the level of cholesterol in your blood. This increases your risk of heart disease. Choose leaner cuts of meat and lower fat dairy products like 1% fat milk over full-fat (or whole) milk.

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#6 Get your 5 A Day
Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. They're a good source of fibre, vitamins and minerals. There are lots of tasty ways to get your 5 A Day, like adding chopped fruit to cereal or including vegetables in your pasta sauces and curries.

#7 Cut down on salt
To maintain healthy blood pressure, avoid using salt at the table and try adding less to your cooking. Once you get used to the taste of food without added salt, you can cut it out completely. Watch out for high salt levels in ready-made foods. Most of the salt we eat is already in the foods we buy. Check the food labels – a food is high in salt if it has more than 1.5g salt (or 0.6g sodium) per 100g. Adults should eat less than 6g of salt a day in total – that's about 1 teaspoon.

#8 Eat fish
Eat fish at least twice a week, including a portion of oily fish. Fish such as pilchards, sardines and salmon are a source of omega-3 fats, which may help protect against heart disease. Pregnant or breastfeeding women should not have more than 2 portions of oily fish a week.

#9 Drink less alcohol
Do not forget that alcohol contains calories. Regularly drinking more than the NHS recommends can have a noticeable impact on your waistline. Try to keep to the recommended daily alcohol limits to reduce the risk of serious problems with your health, including risks to your heart health.

#10 Read the food label
When shopping, it's a good idea to look at the label on food and drink packaging to see how many calories and how much fat, salt and sugar the product contains. Understanding what's in food and how it fits in with the rest of your diet will help you make healthier choices. The Change4Life website has lots of information to help you make healthier
choices for you and your family.

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