



> Heart health

February

Walk-friendly neighborhoods are good for the heart

Can your neighborhood play a role in your health? A new study has found neighborhoods that encourage people to exercise and stick to healthy diets can be good for the heart.

Living in safe, walk-friendly neighborhoods that are near parks, healthy restaurants and grocery stores with fresh fruits and vegetables are ideal surroundings that help people achieve and maintain normal blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Some characteristics of heart-healthy neighborhoods include:

- > Easy access to sidewalks, parks and trails
- > A sense of safety and community
- > Availability of healthy foods

Source: American Heart Association

Healthy eating choices can help prevent heart disease

Your daily eating habits can play a significant role in your ability to reduce heart disease risk. Whether you follow a healthy diet plan or can improve your eating habits, here are a few tips on how to eat healthier and decrease your risk of heart disease:

- > Control your portion size
- > Eat more fruits and veggies
- > Select whole grains for fiber and other nutrients
- > Choose low-fat protein sources
- > Reduce your intake of high-calorie, high-sodium foods
- > Plan meals ahead that contain healthy ingredients

Source: Mayo Clinic

Heart questions to ask your doctor

As you age, asking your doctor questions relating to heart health is one of the best ways to learn how you can improve your health the 99 percent of the time you are not at the doctor's office. Here are some important questions to ask your doctor during your next visit:

- > What is my risk for heart disease?
- > What does my blood pressure mean for me, and what can I do to improve it?
- > What do my cholesterol numbers mean for me, and how can I improve them?
- > Do I need to lose weight?
- > Based on my blood sugar level, am I at risk for diabetes?
- > Do I need to take any other heart disease tests?
- > What kind of physical activities can I do to protect my heart?
- > Should I see a registered dietitian about eating healthier?
- > For smokers: What can you do to help me quit smoking?

Sources: National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Health plans in Alaska provided by Moda Health Plan, Inc. Dental plans in Alaska provided by Delta Dental of Alaska. 5063406_AK (6/14)
*Health coaching programs may not be included in all benefit plans

Moda Health offers its members free one-on-one health coaching
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