

Steps to LivingWell

Eight out of 10 Canadians know that heart disease and stroke can be prevented, postponed or treated by making healthy lifestyle choices; but too often we focus on the barriers rather than the opportunities.

You can keep your heart healthy no matter how old you are, but it does take effort; possibly even changes in your everyday habits, such as eating a heart-healthy diet and increasing your activity level. Any kind of activity that raises your heart rate is good - dancing, cycling, bowling, table tennis to name a few; but walking is perhaps the most popular. Walking is easy and inexpensive, and you can adjust your speed to your fitness level. A simple way to determine if you are working hard enough is to perform the "talk test". If your breathing is somewhat hard while you're exercising but you can talk without gasping for air, you're in the target zone. Strength training also keeps blood vessels young and flexible while increasing blood flow. It can help your heart work more efficiently and reduce cardiovascular risk factors as well.

Enjoy and savour the flavour of healthy foods for your heart such as fruits and vegetables, nuts and whole grains while limiting saturated fats, salt, and foods containing cholesterol, like fatty meats. A high-fibre diet will do double duty of filling you up and helping prevent inflammation of the arteries.

And of course we have chocolate! Many health benefits of dark chocolate are based around its various ingredients to fight free radicals and minimize the effects of aging. That's one study to hang your hat on!

Brought to you by your LivingWell Coaches.

