



Looking after your heart

Almost 10,000 Australians die of a heart attack every year, and many more may be at risk.

According to the Heart Foundation, more than one million Australians aged 30-65 are at high risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke. The good news is heart disease is largely preventable. To start making heart healthy changes, take a moment to understand your risk and how your lifestyle might impact on the most important organ in your body.

Risk factors for heart disease include:



- ▶ Age
- ▶ Ethnic background
- ▶ Having family history of heart disease
- ▶ Smoking (both active smoking and being exposed to second-hand smoke)
- ▶ High blood cholesterol
- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Being physically inactive
- ▶ Being overweight
- ▶ Depression, social isolation and lack of quality support



To find out your cardiovascular disease risk, visit your doctor for a heart health check. Your doctor can then help you develop a plan to work towards reducing your risk as much as possible.

Some risk factors are out of your control, such as age and family history, but there are some lifestyle changes you can make to keep your heart healthy and reduce your risk of disease.



Schedule a yearly checkup. Each year around your birthday, see your doctor for a heart health check. This involves getting your blood pressure and cholesterol checked and having a chat about your lifestyle risk factors.



Get physical. Getting in some moderate physical activity each day is a good way to protect your heart. Being active can help control risk factors such as high blood pressure, as well as helping you to reach and maintain a healthy weight. For the best heart benefits, the Heart Foundation suggests aiming for 30 minutes of moderate activity such as brisk walking on most, if not all, days of the week.



Eat a healthy, balanced diet. To keep your heart in good condition, the Heart Foundation recommends a healthy eating plan that includes a balanced variety of nutritious foods, focusing on colourful vegetables and fruits, wholegrains and legumes, reduced fat dairy, unprocessed lean meats, unsaturated fats, foods enriched with omega-3, and avoiding foods that contain trans-fat.



Cut down on salt. The Heart Foundation recommends adults eat less than 5g of salt (2000 mg of sodium) a day. That is less than a teaspoon a day. Go for fresh foods, and when purchasing packaged products aim for foods with less than 120mg of sodium per 100g or less.



Quit smoking. Smoking is the largest single preventable cause of death in Australia, killing over 15,000 Australians each year. Quitting smoking is not easy, but it is a key lifestyle change you can make to protect your heart – as well as improving your overall health in a number of vital ways.



Maintain a healthy weight. A healthy weight and waist measurement reduces your risk of developing many chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.



Seek treatment for any mental health issues. Studies have shown a link between mental health problems such as depression and the risk of heart disease. If you feel you are experiencing depression, anxiety, stress or other mental health issues, talking to a health professional is an important first step to getting treatment. For more information about mental illness and what treatment options might be available to you, visit the beyondblue website.

The importance of basic first aid

According to the Australian Red Cross, Australia has one of the lowest rates of first-aid training in the world with less than 5 percent of people trained in how to handle an emergency situation.

Learning basic first aid techniques can help you cope with an emergency. You may be able to keep a person breathing, reduce their pain or minimise the consequences of injury or sudden illness until an ambulance arrives. This could mean the difference between life and death. Research shows for motor vehicle accidents alone, up to 15 percent of deaths could have been prevented each year if basic first aid was administered at the scene before paramedics arrived.

Although many people undertake first aid training due to a job requirement, it is something that everyone can benefit from learning. Whether you need to become certified in emergency techniques as a part of your job, you are about to become a new parent, or simply because you would like to be of assistance to others, first aid skills may be useful in a variety of situations. Becoming first aid certified not only benefits you as an individual, but extends to your family, friends, co-workers, and the community as a whole.

If you want to learn first aid, there are plenty of courses available. St John Ambulance, the Royal Life Saving Society and the Red Cross are among organisations that offer courses and certificates in first aid, including CPR.



Beef and broccoli stir fry with cauliflower rice

Ingredients:

Cauliflower rice

- ▶ 1 head of cauliflower, cut into florets
- ▶ 1 medium onion
- ▶ 1 tablespoon of oil
- ▶ salt and pepper

Beef and broccoli stir fry:

- ▶ 1 tablespoon of oil
- ▶ 600g flank steak, thinly sliced
- ▶ 4 cups of broccoli, cut into florets
- ▶ ¼ cup of tamari (or gluten free soy sauce)
- ▶ 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ▶ 1 tablespoon of fresh ginger, minced
- ▶ 1 teaspoon of chilli flakes
- ▶ 1 teaspoon of sesame oil
- ▶ 1½ tablespoons of honey

Method:

Cauliflower rice

1. Add onion to a food processor or blender and mince. Add cauliflower florets, and process until uniformly chopped. Do not go overboard or it will turn to mush, you may have to stop early and pull out some of the bigger florets to keep it in “rice” form.
2. Heat a large pan to medium high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of oil to the pan.
3. Add the onion cauliflower mixture. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Sauté for 4-5 minutes, or until just tender but still with a “crunch” to it.
5. Remove from heat.

Beef and broccoli stir fry

1. In a small bowl, mix tamari, garlic cloves, ginger, chilli flakes, honey, and sesame oil. Set aside.
2. Season flank steak with salt and pepper.
3. Heat a wok to medium high heat. Add oil to pan and then add flank steak. Stir fry for 4-5 minutes until cooked through, add broccoli and tamari sauce mixture. Cover.
4. Stir fry for 2 minutes.
5. Serve over cauliflower rice.



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