



7 Super Heart Secrets

- 1. Give up smoking.** It's the single most damaging habit for your heart. Smoking increases blood pressure, decreases exercise tolerance, decreases good cholesterol, and increases the tendency for clotting.
- 2. Get at least 30 minutes of good, vigorous aerobic exercise every day.** Literally hundreds of studies have shown that it significantly lowers your risk of cardiovascular disease.
- 3. Eat fewer salty and fatty foods, which have been linked with heart disease.** Focus on healthy fats and swap junk food for whole, natural foods.
- 4. Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day.** Not only will they provide your heart with essential nutrients, including antioxidants, but they will help you maintain a balanced weight, which reduced the risk of heart disease.
- 5. Relax.** Stress is a precursor to heart disease and should be avoided if possible. Consider taking up meditation, yoga or other soothing activities. Adequate sleep is also essential.
- 6. Monitor your alcohol intake carefully.** Too much alcohol can damage your heart muscle, increase blood pressure, and also lead to weight gain. Binge drinking will increase your risk of having a heart attack, so you should aim to limit your intake to less than two units per day.
- 7. Get your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked by your GP.** The higher your blood pressure, the shorter your life expectancy! People with high blood pressure run the risk of having a stroke or heart attack. High levels of cholesterol in the blood result in fatty deposits in your arteries, which can lead to coronary heart disease. You can lower your cholesterol by exercising and eating high fibre foods such as porridge, beans, pulses, lentils, nuts, fruits and vegetables.

