

HealthyYou

Winter 2016



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St. Margaret's Health

SMP Health System

HeartHealthy



As you go about your day, you probably don't think much about the organ that makes it all possible, your heart. It pumps for you all day long, and it's your hardest working muscle. Making small changes in your habits can make a big difference in your heart health. Here are some steps to take that will improve your heart health and decrease your risk of heart disease.



Aim for lucky number seven.

The next time you are tempted to stay up late, just think about how good a full night's sleep is for your heart. In one study, young and middle-age adults who slept 7 hours a night had less calcium in their arteries – an early sign of heart disease – than those who slept 5 hours or less or those who slept 9 hours or more.

Keep the pressure off.

It is a good idea to cut back on salt, limit alcohol to no more than one to two drinks a day, manage your stress levels, and get regular exercise. It is also important to get your blood pressure checked at least once every 2 years. It measures the amount of pressure flowing through your arteries with every heartbeat. If your blood pressure gets too high, the extra force can damage artery walls making it more difficult for blood and oxygen to get to and from the heart.

Slash saturated fats.

Too much bad cholesterol can clog the heart and arteries with dangerous plaque. Saturated and trans fat can be found in red meat, full-fat dairy products, and fried or processed foods. It is important to cut back on these products and cut trans-fat products out completely. Check the ingredient list on products for hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated – those are the trans-fat. Adults should get a cholesterol blood test every 5 years.

Make a shift to avoid diabetes.

If you are 45 or older, pregnant, or overweight your doctor should test your blood sugar. High blood sugar can also damage your arteries and put you at risk for heart disease. If you have diabetes, it is imperative that you improve your diet and physical activity.

Sit less and sweat more.

You should be getting at least 150 minutes a week (30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) of moderate exercise. Moderate exercise is any activity that gets you moving and breaking a sweat. If you find yourself sitting a lot, choose to stand and walk while doing things like talking on the phone.

Have more fruit and less fruit juice.

Your heart works best when it runs on clean fuel. That means eating lots of natural, whole foods. Fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds contain many vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, and enzymes that your body needs to function properly and keep you healthy. Cut back on anything man-made – things that are refined or processed. Products made with refined flour and sugar and have other chemical additives are void of most of those life-giving benefits of unaltered, whole foods. One of the quickest ways to clean up your diet is to cut out sugary and chemically-enhanced drinks.

Crunch the numbers.

If you need to lose weight, the easiest way to find out is to calculate your body mass index (BMI). BMI is a number based on your weight in relation to your height. If you have a BMI of 25 or higher, you are considered overweight and have a higher risk of heart disease. A BMI of 30 or higher puts you at an even higher risk. The way you can lose weight is by taking in fewer calories each day than you burn off. It means a combination of eating healthier foods and getting more exercise.

Ditch the cigarettes – tobacco and electronic.

Smoking and secondhand smoking are bad for your heart. If you smoke, quit and try to avoid spending time around other people who are smoking. Today, a popular alternative to traditional tobacco products are e-cigarettes. What many people don't realize is that e-cigarettes are just as harmful. Not only has there been an increase in reports of e-cigarette liquid exposure poisonings, but testing the products has resulted in finding the presence of toxic chemicals.

According to the American Lung Association,

"We don't presently know what is in e-cigarettes. However, in initial lab tests conducted in 2009 the FDA found detectable levels of toxic cancer-causing chemicals, including an ingredient used in anti-freeze, in two leading brands of e-cigarettes and 18 various cartridges. A review of studies found that levels of toxins in e-cigarette aerosol varied considerably within and between brands. A 2014 study found that aerosol from e-cigarettes with a higher voltage level contains more formaldehyde, another carcinogen with the potential to cause cancer. Also, Diacetyl, a buttery flavored chemical often added to food products such as popcorn, caramel, and dairy products, has also been found in some e-cigarettes with flavors. Diacetyl can cause bronchiolitis obliterans, a serious and irreversible lung disease commonly known as 'popcorn lung'."

Get a stress busting hobby.

Stress is an unavoidable part of life. You cannot avoid it entirely, but you can choose how you handle and react to it. Try finding a healthy way of dealing with stress, whether it's meditation, yoga, exercise, singing, painting, doing something kind for someone else, or something else you enjoy. It is important to keep yourself from continually focusing on the negatives and to get your mind on things that help you recognize what matters and bring joy to your life.

Throw your heart a birthday party

If you follow these tips, your "heart age" will be younger. Heart age is based on risk factors you can change — like those listed above — and those that you can't change like your age, gender, and family history. A 2015 CDC study found that 70% of Americans have heart ages older than their actual age: men by 7.8 years and women by 5.4 years, on average. The CDC says that it's never too late to turn back the clock on your heart health. Knowing your heart age and watching it come down over time, may be the motivation you need to make important changes.



EatingHEALTHY

Tuscan Vegetable Soup

Serves 6, 35 mins.

Ingredients:

1/2 c celery diced (2 stalks)
2 c Baby spinach, leaves
1 (15oz) can Canellini beans,
low-sodium
2 Carrots, diced (1/2 c)
1 clove Garlic
1/2 large Onion, diced (1 c)
2 tsb Sage, fresh
1 Tbsb Thyme, fresh
1 (14.5oz) can Tomatoes,
no salt added
1 small Zucchini, diced (1.5 c)
32oz Chicken or Vegetable broth
1/4 tsp Black pepper
1/2 tsp Salt
1 Tbsp Olive Oil
1/3 c Parmesean

This soup is full bodied,
flavorful and enough
for lunch or dinner. You
will love it's versatility.
You can use almost
any vegetable you
have in your fridge
along with some beans
and the fresh herbs
and it will give you a
healthy, easy meal
in no time.

Directions:

In a small bowl, mash half of the
beans with a masher or the back
of a spoon, and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large soup pot
over medium-high heat.

Add the onion, carrots, celery,
zucchini, garlic, thyme, sage, 1/2
teaspoon of salt and 1/4 teaspoon
of pepper.

Cook while stirring occasionally
until the vegetables are tender,
about 5 minutes.

Add the broth and tomatoes with
the juice and bring to a boil.

Add the mashed and whole beans
and the spinach leaves.

Cook until the spinach is wilted,
about 3 minutes more.

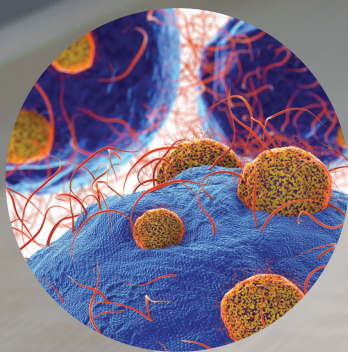
Serve topped with Parmesan,
if desired.

*Recommended by
St. Margaret's dietitians,
Jennifer Scully, RD, LDN,
& Katie Kaufman, MS, RD, LDN
[pinterest.com/in/100064422945266857/](https://www.pinterest.com/in/100064422945266857/)*

Winter GERMS



As the cold air sets in and the days get shorter, everyone spends more time cooped up indoors trying to stay warm. Germs exist around us all day long and there are many things we can do to prevent them from causing infections and sickness. Germs refer to microscopic living things like bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa, which can cause disease. People are actually more susceptible to picking up germs indoors than out.



According to **KidsHealth.org**, bacteria are tiny, single-celled organisms that get nutrients from their environments. In some cases, that environment is your child or some other living being. Some bacteria are good for our bodies – they help the digestive system work and keep harmful bacteria from moving in. Other bacteria are used to produce medicines and vaccines.

Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections. If an antibiotic has been prescribed to you or your family member, please make sure to follow the correct dosage instructions and complete the entire course of treatment.

Viruses cannot survive, grow, and reproduce unless a person or animal gives them the vessel to accomplish that. Viruses can only live for a very short time outside other living cells. Once a virus has moved into someone's body, it spreads easily and can make a person sick. Viruses can be responsible for a wide range of things, like minor colds, common illnesses

such as the flu, and extremely serious diseases like smallpox or HIV/AIDS. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses. Colds and the flu usually run their course rather quickly. Some antiviral agents have been developed against a small group of viruses.

Fungi are multi-celled, plant-like organisms. They get nutrition from plants, food, and animals in damp, warm environments. Fungi, such as athlete's foot, are not dangerous in a healthy person and cause only minor discomfort. Protozoa are one-celled organisms and many are able to move on their own. Protozoa love moisture, so intestinal infections and other diseases they cause are often spread through contaminated water.

Once any of these organisms invade a body, they do tend to get ready to stay a while. These germs draw all of their energy from the host. As they use up your nutrients and energy, they may produce proteins known as toxins. Some toxins

cause symptoms similar to the common cold or flu, such as sniffles, sneezing, coughing, and diarrhea. Other toxins can cause high fever, increased heart rate, low blood pressure, or even life-threatening illness.

Most germs are spread through the air through sneezing and coughing or through body fluids like sweat, saliva, or blood. Limiting contact with those substances as much as possible is the best protection against germs. Learning proper handwashing techniques and making it a priority is the best way to stop germs from causing sickness.

Many believe that the bathroom is the most contaminated place in their home – that is incorrect. Three of the top five germ hot spots in a household actually exist in the kitchen. The National Science Foundation (nsf.org) and WebMD have identified some of the top spots and provide tips for sanitization.

HealthWATCH

- **Kitchen Sponge/Dish Rag/Kitchen Sink**

The item most frequently used to clean dishes and countertops was actually the most germ-laden place found in most homes. Sponges and dish rags can pick up bacteria during the cleaning process and, if not properly sanitized between uses, can become a breeding ground. The second highest concentration was found in the kitchen sink. To clean, wet a sponge and zap it in the microwave for two minutes to kill any germs. Sanitize your sink by washing it with bleach and water and then letting the solution run down the drain. Also, remember to clean the drain plug and wash your hands!

- **Toothbrush Holder/Toothbrush**

The toothbrush holder claimed the top spot for most germs in the bathroom. Your toothbrush is rinsed off and put away damp, which is an invitation to bacteria. If the holder is dishwasher safe, run it through a cycle once a week or so. It is also recommended to place your toothbrush where it can air out between uses, but not too close to the toilet! Also, if someone has been sick recently, replace their toothbrush and any others it is stored near.

- **Coffee Reservoir**

Given the dark, damp location, it's not a surprising location for bacteria, mold, and mildew to grow. To clean, follow the manufacturer's instructions. A common recommendation is to add up to four cups of undiluted vinegar to the reservoir, let it stand for 30 minutes, and then run it through. Then follow by running two to three cycles of fresh water through it.

- **Faucet Handles**

Faucet handles in both the kitchen and bath can contain coliform bacteria as well as yeast or mold. Clean with disinfecting cleaner or wipes often.

- **Salt and Pepper Shakers**

People don't often think of these when they're cleaning up after dinner, but they get touched throughout the food prep process and all meal long. When wiping the table, wipe the shakers, too. Remember to always wash your hands before and after preparing food.

- **Pet Bowl/Pet Toys**

Pet dishes should be washed either in a sanitizing dishwasher or scrubbed by hand in hot, soapy water and then rinsed. Hard pet toys can be washed gently with hot, soapy water and rinsed or disinfected with a mild bleach solution and thoroughly rinsed. Soft toys can be washed with laundry in a washing machine.

- **Countertops/Cutting Boards**

Countertops and cutting boards come in contact with many different items, foods, and improperly washed hands. Place cutting boards in dishwasher or wash them along with the countertops with hot, soapy water. Rinse and apply a bleach water solution or other recommended sanitizing agent.

- **TV Remote/Computer Keyboard/Cell Phone**

These offenders come in contact with hands – and lots of them – all day long. A study found that a cell phone can have up to 10 times more bacteria on it than most toilet seats! So don't forget about wiping them down consistently too. Diluted bleach is best for disinfecting against germs; but for everyday cleaning, white distilled vinegar can't be beat. Mix one part vinegar and nine parts water in a spray bottle or bucket. It will safely clean most surfaces and remove grease, plus it's safe to use around kids and pets.

Remember that the most important defense against germs is always frequent and proper handwashing techniques. The CDC recommends using friction while washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds – about the time it takes you to sing "Happy Birthday" twice. Hand sanitizer can be used to kill germs, but it should never replace frequent hand washing.

Also, take time this winter to tackle other household chores you've been putting off. A cold, dreary day is a perfect time to declutter a room you keep ignoring, change your furnace filters, organize your closets, go through spices and throw away those that are expired, clean the inside of your windows, deep clean the grout in the kitchen and bathroom with a scrub brush, or clean out a basement and get rid of old or unused items. If you take on one thing at a time and work until it's finished, you'll be amazed at how much you can get done and reduce the amount of germs in your home.

Sinusitis & Winter Allergies

For many people, the spring and fall seasons are times to keep plenty of tissues and medication on hand. They have to prepare to treat symptoms such as runny and stuffy noses, itchy, watery eyes and headaches. The key to a speedy recovery and relief from these symptoms is choosing the appropriate course of treatment and knowing whether your symptoms are that of an allergy or sinusitis. Both conditions share similar symptoms, so it is easy to incorrectly self-diagnose one as the other and choose the wrong treatment option.

Do you have allergies?

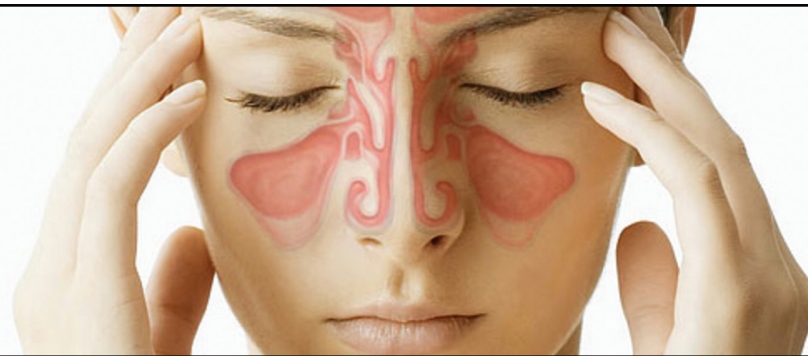
An allergy is the body's reaction to allergens such as bee venom, dust, medication, pet dander, pollen, ragweed and even some foods. Symptoms can range from mild to life-threatening and vary from one person to another. Common symptoms of allergies triggered by dust, pet dander and pollen are: runny nose, nasal congestion, sneezing, scratchy throat, and itchy, puffy, or watery eyes.

Do you have sinusitis?

Sinusitis is an inflammation and swelling of the sinuses, which block drainage and causes mucus buildup causing breathing through the nose very difficult. You may also experience swelling around the eyes and in the face, as well as throbbing headache or facial pain. Sinusitis may be caused by infection, nasal polyps, or a deviated septum. Symptoms include yellow-green nasal discharge, tenderness around the eyes, cheeks or upper jaw, fever, fatigue or sore throat. Sinuses are also responsible for the depth and tone of your voice.

There are eight sinus cavities in total:

- Two sinus cavities are in your forehead.
- Two are behind your cheekbone.
- Two sinus cavities are within the bones between your eyes.
- Two are behind each eye.



Top Triggers of Winter Allergies

According to Asriani Chui, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Medicine (Allergy/Immunology), at the College of Wisconsin, many of those warm weather irritants are around all year, like pet dander, mold, and mildew. And once you settle indoors for the chilly holiday season – the windows closed, the heater on—your exposure to these allergens spike. The best way to handle winter allergies is to understand what's triggering them and why.

- **Pet dander:** Cold weather means pets are indoors more often causing your exposure to dander to escalate in the winter months leading to symptoms.
- **Mold and mildew:** Decaying leaves and other yard waste gives mold and mildew an ideal breeding ground. Shoes and clothes then provide these damp, clingy irritants with an easy way inside.
- **Temperate climates:** In milder climates, where there is little to no frost, the presence of year-round presence of pollen and other allergens continue throughout the year.
- **Damp wood:** Cut wood stored outside easily becomes a shelter for mold spores. Bringing the wood inside for storage can trigger allergic reactions.

Top Triggers of Sinusitis

Common triggers of sinusitis include:

- **Cold or viral infection.** Colds are caused by a virus, which can make your nasal tissue swell, blocking the holes that normally drain your sinuses.
- **Air pollution and smog.** Allergens and pollutants such as dust, outdoor air pollution, and perfumes may contribute to coughing, irritation to the nose and inflammation that can increase your risk of sinusitis.
- **Airborne allergens.** Allergies are often associated with sinusitis because inflammation can block the nasal passages and prevent draining.
- **Dry or cold air.** Mucus can get trapped in the nasal passage causing it to lose water and thicken making symptoms of sinusitis worse.

Allergy Treatments

Besides a thorough history of your symptoms and physical exam, your doctor can do certain test, such as, blood/skin test, to determine whether you have an allergy or sinusitis. Doctors will want to determine if your symptoms last longer than 1-2 weeks or a history of recurring symptoms during the winter time. Your doctor may prescribe allergy medication, a decongestant or nasal steroids. An allergy shot is another treatment option if medication does not help.

Sinusitis Treatments

Doctors will want to do a comprehensive history of symptoms and physical exam as well for sinusitis. Further diagnostics such as CT scan of the sinuses may be necessary for some individuals. Many patients are prescribed antibiotics. The problem with antibiotics though is that it may compound the problem. The most effective treatment options are nasal drops that contain oxymetazoline, saline nasal irrigation, drinking warm fluids or gargling saltwater to relieve any throat pain, exposure to moist, warm air in the shower, or over the counter medication.

Sinusitis Do's and Don'ts

- **Go to school or work.** Sinusitis is not contagious.
- **Choose OTC drugs carefully.** Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can make it better along with decongestant nasal spray. If you use them for more than a few days, go see your doctor.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of fluids. Hot liquids can help break up the stuffiness in your nose.
- **Use warm compression.** Moist heat (warm towel or shower) can relieve your sinus pressure and open up the blockage in your nose.
- **Use a humidifier.** Cool mist can make you less stuffy, but keep water clean. Empty the tank every day and clean it out before refilling it with water.
- **Rinse your sinuses or "nasal lavage."** Clean the inside of your nose with sterile solution. Make sure to use distilled or sterile water or boiled water after it has cooled down.
- **Work out wisely.** Sinusitis can cause dizziness and problems with coordination so take extra precaution when deciding to work out or not. If you feel pressure in your chest, sit out. When you are having trouble breathing, it can strain your heart.
- **Wait to fly.** Taking off or landing in a plane can put a lot of pressure on your ears and head.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Alcohol makes your body dehydrated along with the lining of your nose to swell, which makes your symptoms worse.
- **Hold off on the pool.** Studies show that the chlorine in pools can irritate the passageways of your nose.
- **Try not to breathe in things that will irritate the mucous membranes.** The goal is to soothe your sinuses, not inflame them. Try to avoid places that have cigarette smoke and stay indoors when air pollution levels are high.

Sources: webmd.com, health.com, atlantaent.com/allergiesvssinusitis.

WINTERfitness

After the fun and ease of being more active during the summer and fall months, the chill of a winter day and the early setting sun can discourage even the most motivated exercisers. When your motivation is lacking and the air is crisp, it can be easy to pack away your workout clothes and return to that long-lost friend – your couch. However cold it may be outdoors, don't let it completely derail your workout routine.

Studies have shown that it takes roughly a month for someone to develop a habit and a person can get out of a habit even faster. Be sure to keep your health routine, which with just a few small changes can be adapted to the cold weather. The benefits of physical activity are vital to reduce the risk of disease and increase longevity and overall health, so it is important to keep up that healthy activity routine.

If outdoor activities are what you enjoy, don't let the frigid temperatures dissuade you. Staying warm doesn't require fancy, expensive gear. Simply using multiple layers keeps you insulated well enough to stay comfortable while you warm up. It also allows you to shed layers as your temperature rises and you begin to sweat. It is important to keep your clothing dry in the winter because you will lose heat very quickly as sweat evaporates.

FITNESS Magazine has broken down the art of layering with ease:

- **Base layer:** Choose a snug but breathable shirt that wicks sweat from skin; look for a synthetic fabric. Avoid cotton here; it holds on to moisture and can quickly lose its insulating powers when wet. Try a turtleneck for walking or a long-sleeve tee for running.
- **Middle layer:** Add a fleece or wool top to provide insulation – how thick depends on the temperature and the intensity of your exercise. Don't forget your hat and mittens if it is near freezing.
- **Outer layer:** When it dips below freezing, top off with a jacket that resists wind and water, but still breathes. As it nears zero, also add a fourth insulating layer between the middle and outer layers and a ski mask to shield your face.



If running, walking, or hiking outdoors is what you enjoy, also look at investing in a trail running shoe for its deeper treads, which provide better traction. Some water-resistant models may have removable spikes or purchase a pair of winter cleats to wear over your running sneakers. With safety as a top priority, FITNESS Magazine also reminds outdoor enthusiasts to listen to your body, run slower than normal with shorter strides, skip the hills, and avoid ice.

To keep active and interested, the American College of Sports Medicine notes that learning a new sport or activity like ice skating, snowshoeing, skiing, or geocaching is a great way to increase your physical activity in the winter. It also offers the added benefit that you and your family can have fun and make some new friends in the process. Make sure that you leave ample time for warm ups and cool downs and stop if your body tells you to.



- When you head to the mall, tell yourself you can shop once you walk briskly around the entire structure three times – and stick to that.
- Yoga and pilates are great ways to keep muscles limber, take a stress break, and strengthen core muscles and improve posture.
- According to WebMD, swimming is the most popular athletic activity in the United States. Swimmers tend to live longer and have better moods than people who do not exercise.
- Bowling. Yes, bowling is a fun, social activity that burns calories.
- When in doubt, take the stairs. WebMD points out that every time you choose the stairs over the elevator or escalator, you burn more calories and reduce your risk of heart disease. Keep in mind the added benefit of having toned legs for summer!
- If you're engrossed in a new television show or binge-watching on a snowy weekend, stash resistance bands or light hand weights near the couch to remind yourself to get moving during commercial breaks. You can also try a few no-equipment moves such as crunches, lunges, and high knee steps instead of fast-forwarding through the advertisements.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 150 minutes of exercise each week. Break down that number into manageable chunks and take extra steps as you do things around the house to reach that goal. By doing small doses of fitness each day, the weekly task doesn't feel so daunting.

Just because you're spending more time indoors this time of year, doesn't mean that time can't be beneficial. Here are some things you can do inside to keep yourself healthy:

Whatever your preference, just know that fitness isn't going to become a habit unless you make it easy. Part of that is knowing what works for you and what you enjoy. As the weather gets colder, remember to keep your heart rate rising!



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