Heart knowledge vital for life

Good heart health requires a combination of diet, exercise and knowledge. If you’re not sure where to start, try these tips:

- Have your blood pressure and cholesterol measured by your doctor. This is the most accurate way to determine your risk for heart disease.
- Take a few minutes to sit down and determine your risk factors. This will help you prioritize your goals.
- Check with your doctor before taking any new medications or supplements. This is especially important if you are pregnant or nursing.
- Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Avoid foods high in saturated fat and sodium.
- Get regular exercise, such as walking, swimming, or cycling. Aim for at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week.
- Quit smoking. If you smoke, talk to your doctor about smoking cessation programs.
- Manage stress. Learn relaxation techniques, such as yoga or meditation.
- If you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, take prescribed medication as directed.
- Regularly check your reflexes, such as your ankle, arm, and knee.
- Know your family history of heart disease. This can help you identify any risk factors you may have.
- Get regular checkups with your doctor. This is especially important if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol.
- Keep an eye on your weight. If you are overweight, talk to your doctor about ways to lose weight.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks. This can help you avoid water and high-sodium snacks.
- Stay active. Find a physical activity you enjoy and do it regularly.
- Get enough sleep. Lack of sleep has been linked to heart disease.
- Reduce your alcohol intake. If you choose to drink, limit your intake to one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men.
- Take care of your mental health. Seek professional help if you are feeling overwhelmed.
- Use a pedometer to track your steps. Aim for at least 10,000 steps a day.

If you have any questions or concerns about heart health, talk to your doctor. They can help you develop a personalized plan to improve your heart health.