# Heart Health

### 4 Chambers of Heart Health

Your heart has four chambers: two atria and two ventricles. It takes all four of these chambers working in concert to pump life-giving oxygen through your bloodstream—each chamber must function properly to prevent a catastrophic health emergency.

Similarly, four areas of your lifestyle—nutrition, physical activity, health education and stress management - have a massive impact on your heart's (and body's) overall health. This month's activity will ask you to examine each of these areas and consider how you can live a holistically heart-healthy lifestyle.

#### **Nutrition:**

# Use the Right Fuel

If you fill a traditional car up with diesel, it stops working - if you only eat unhealthy foods, your body breaks down as well. Use the nutrition tips and shopping list in this month's newsletter to guide your food choices in February.

# Your Activity

Each week, practice following the guidelines for a different food group:

- Week 1: Vegetables and fruits
- Week 2: Dairy products & fats and oils
- Week 3: Breads, cereals and grains
- Week 4: Meat, beans, eggs and nuts

#### **Education:**

#### The More You Know...

To effectively fight heart disease, you need to know your numbers, particularly cholesterol, blood pressure and body mass index (BMI).

# Your Activity

If you haven't visited a doctor in the past year, make an appointment (or confirm you already have one) for a basic check-up. The appointment doesn't need to take place in February; you just need to get it on the books!



# Physical Activity:

# Move Your Way to Better Health

Simply being active for 150 minutes each week\* can greatly improve your health. Even short, 10-minute bouts of moderate to intense activity have a positive impact. Think of a few activities you enjoy—walking, running, biking, swimming, etc.—and stay active each day.

# Your Activity

Find time for 150 active minutes each week.





### **Stress Management:**

### Make Your Heart Happy

Unpredictable or consistently high stress levels make your heart work harder and often lead to bad habits that cause poor health. Thankfully, stress management is a skill you can practice. An easy, free and effective way to manage stress is to practice deep breathing each day.

# Your Activity

Spend 5-10 minutes each day in a calm, quiet place and practice deep breathing:

- Sit in a comfortable position with your feet on the floor or lie down; close your eyes.
- 2. Picture yourself in a peaceful place; whatever feels soothing to you.
- Inhale and exhale; focus on breathing slowly and deeply.
- 4. Continue to breathe slowly for 5-10 minutes or more.

Stay positive! Change is hard for everyone and studies show it takes 60-90 days to build new habits, so it's likely there will be stumbles along the way. Forgive yourself, start over and keep going!

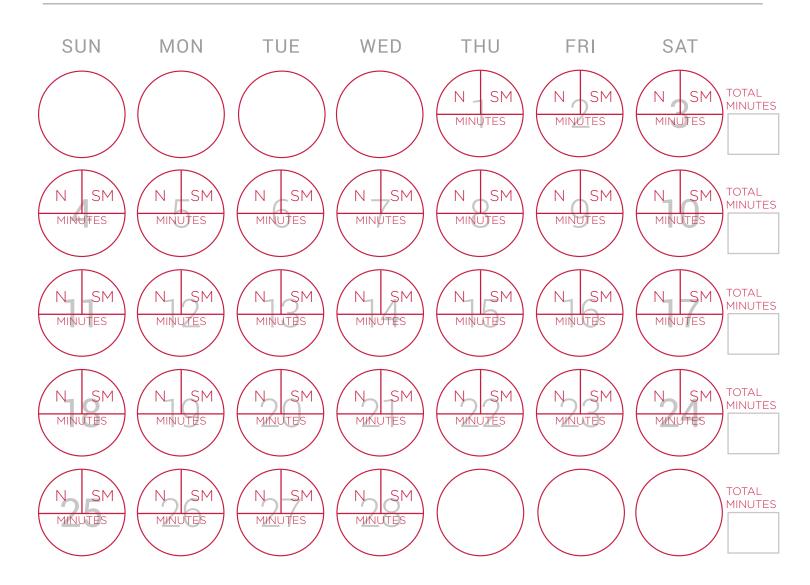


<sup>\*</sup>Always consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Insurance | Risk Management | Consulting

# Activity Tracking

Nutrition	Education	Physical	Stress Management
Each week, practice following the guidelines for a different food group:	Schedule a doctor's appointment.	Find time for 150 active minutes each week.	Spend 5-10 minutes each day in a calm, quiet place and practice deep breathing.
<ul> <li>Week 1: Vegetables and fruits</li> <li>Week 2: Dairy products &amp; fats and oils</li> <li>Week 3: Breads, cereals and grains</li> <li>Week 4: Meat, beans, eggs and nuts</li> </ul>	Write your appointment on the calendar.	Keep track of your daily minutes. At the end of each week, total your completed minutes of activity.	For each day you complete 5-10 minutes of quiet time, cross-off "SM" on the calendar.
For each day your Nutrition task is completed, cross off "N" on the calendar.			







# Employer Activity Tracking

Please complete the following information and submit it to your employer to receive credit for this activity:

Name: Date:
Nutrition
Were you successful in your efforts to follow the dietary guidelines each week? $\square$ YES $\square$ NO
If no, what was the most difficult part of following the guidelines?
Education
Did you schedule or confirm a doctor's appointment?   YES   NO
Physical Activity
Did you increase your activity level this month? $\square$ YES $\square$ NO
What is your favorite activity to "get moving"?
Stress Management
Were you able to focus on your breathing at least once a week this month? $\square$ YES $\square$ NO
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If no, what obstacles prevented you from doing so?