

The UConn Buzz



Heart Healthy

Are you heart healthy? According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. The CDC estimates that a person dies of heart disease **every 36 seconds** in this country. Understanding your risk and reducing that risk can put you on the road to a stronger heart. Staying healthy by being physically active, eating healthy food, reducing stress and having good oral hygiene are just some of the ways you can improve your heart health.



To protect your heart, the first step is to learn your own personal risk factors for heart disease. Risk factors are conditions or habits that make you more likely to develop a disease.

Some of the risk factors for heart disease are:

- ◇ Age
- ◇ Uncontrolled blood pressure
- ◇ A family history of heart disease
- ◇ Diabetes
- ◇ Being physically inactive
- ◇ Excessive alcohol consumption
- ◇ [Tobacco use](#)

It is also important to get screened by your medical provider for indicators of heart disease. At your annual physical you can discuss your personal risk factors for heart disease

and ways to address the problems early. Remember you are part of your own health care team. You provide important information and in turn need information to continue to take care of your health.

Being physically active can help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, but many people in the US don't get the recommended amount of physical activity. Small changes can help you get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every week, such as breaking your workout up: 15 minutes of walking in the morning and 15 minutes later in the day.

Physical activity can also lower "bad" LDL cholesterol levels, increase "good" HDL cholesterol levels, reduce blood pressure, and thereby reduce stress on your heart.

Another important way to keep your heart healthy is by getting good-quality **sleep**. How much sleep you need changes over your lifespan but the recommendation is 7-9 hours a night. Quality sleep is one where you wake up rested and restored and wake up no more than once a night. For more help on getting healthy sleep download ["Your Guide to Healthy Sleep"](#)



Taking good care of your mouth is also part of taking care of your heart. Studies have found a link between heart disease and periodontal disease (gum infection , inflammation, and tooth decay). Health professionals stress the importance of brushing your teeth at least twice a day for 2 min, flossing once a day and seeing

your dental provider at least once a year. In a study published in [International Journal of Cardiology](#), researchers concluded "The combination of decreased frequency and duration of tooth brushing is associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular events."

According to the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#), a **healthy diet** that is low in sodium and saturated fat is key to heart disease prevention. The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan recommends:

- ◇ Eating vegetables, fruits, and whole grains
- ◇ Eating fish, poultry, beans, nuts, vegetable oils, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products
- ◇ Limiting foods that are high in saturated fat and sodium
- ◇ Limiting sugar and other sweeteners

Find heart-healthy DASH recipes at: [healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov](#)

You can also reduce your risk of heart disease by limiting your [alcohol consumption](#) and [quitting the use of tobacco](#).

Learn more about heart health and heart-healthy activities in your community, and see what others are doing for their heart health, at [nhlbi.nih.gov/ourhearts](#)

Sources: National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Institutes of Health, EHHH, and the American Heart Association.

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Sound Meditation Concert, March 5 2-3:30pm, Patriot Park Community Center 124 Lake St, Coventry

Relax and let the soothing sounds of live gongs and singing bowls wash over you perfect setting to release any negative energy, and connect with your calm and balance within.

Attendance limited. Attendants are asked to stay masked throughout the concert. They will be following town and state health protocols. For more information please follow the above link.

Courthouse O'Putnam 5K, March 13 in Putnam.

Run the northeast corner of Connecticut in a fun 5K that starts and finishes in picturesque downtown Putnam. The loop course along the Quinebaug River finishes in front of the Courthouse Bar & Grille, where the post-race party tops off the Irish celebration. Costumes definitely encouraged!

EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: Calendula with Moonbasket (Indie/Folk) March 19 at 7:30PM. The Packing House, 156 River Rd, Willington, CT CALENDULA is a singer-songwriter based in New England. Calendula (Abigail Golec) is the stage name of her folk music project. Calendula will be joined by Moonbasket.

Hartford Healthcare Mystic Half Marathon & 10k, May 15 in Mystic.

Experience the beautiful Mystic shoreline community at the Hartford HealthCare Mystic Half Marathon and 10K! Enjoy scenic views for 13.1 or 6.2 miles, running from Olde Mistick Village, past historic ships, through the charming downtown with race fin-



Delicious Oven-Baked French Fries

Baking instead of frying these potatoes reduces the fat while keeping them crispy.

Prep time: 10 minutes. Cook time: 35 minutes. Makes 5 servings. Serving size: 1 cup.

Ingredients

- ◆ 4 large potatoes (2 lbs.) (regular or sweet potatoes)
- ◆ 8 C ice water 1 tsp garlic powder
- ◆ 1 tsp onion powder 1/4 tsp salt
- ◆ 1 tsp white pepper 1/4 allspice
- ◆ 1 tsp hot pepper flakes 1 Tbsp vegetable oil

Directions

- Scrub potatoes and cut them into long 1/2-inch strips. Place the strips in the ice water, cover and chill for 1 hour or longer.
- Remove potato strips & dry them completely. Preheat oven to 475
- Place garlic powder, onion powder, salt, white pepper, allspice and pepper flakes in a plastic bag. Toss the potato strips in the spice mixture.
- Put the potato strips in a shallow baking pan and brush them with oil.
- Cover the baking pan with aluminum foil and bake at 475°F for 15 minutes
- Remove the foil and continue baking, uncovered, for an additional 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Turn fries occasionally to brown on all sides. ENJOY!

Oral Cancer: Are you at Risk?

April is oral cancer awareness month. Oral cancer affects both men and women, and people of all racial and ethnic groups. At one time it was seen primarily in people over 40 years old but it is now occurring in people under 40.

One of the dangers of this cancer is that in its early stages, it can go unnoticed. It can be painless, and little in the way of physical changes may be obvious.

Catching oral cancer early is important to getting early treatment. Some things to look out for are:

- Sores that last more than 2 weeks
- Numbness in the tongue or other areas
- Swelling of the jaw

- For more symptoms: [Oral Cancer](#)
- During your routine dental appointments your dental providers will perform oral cancer screenings so it is important to see your dentist at least once a year.

Risk factors for oral cancer include age, a history of tobacco use, and certain types of sexually transmitted human papillomavirus (HPV).

Besides screening there are lifestyle changes that can reduce your risk for oral cancer:

- Stop using tobacco, ([Tobacco Cessation](#))
- Get regular physical activity. The recommendation is a minimum of 150 min per week & two days should include strength training.
- Practice good oral hygiene:

brushing at least 2x daily and floss at least once daily.

- Limit alcohol intake
- Eat a healthy diet that includes lots of fiber from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts.

Be proactive and stay informed about your risks: [Oral Cavity and Oropharyngeal Cancer Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevention](#)

For more information : [Oral Cancer Foundation](#) or the [American Cancer Society](#)

Sources: National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Oral Cancer Foundation and the American Cancer Society

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice. the easy choice.

