

# Heart and Brain Health: Things You Can Do

## Activity, healthy eating, and cholesterol

### About cholesterol

- Cholesterol is a fatty material in your blood and cells.
- LDL is “bad” cholesterol and HDL is “good” cholesterol. Both can be measured to show how healthy your heart is.



Getting regular exercise can help keep your heart healthy and your “bad” LDL cholesterol low.

Choosing healthy traditional foods can help you keep your “good” HDL cholesterol levels high.



### Tips for better health

- Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise every day.
- Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Limit sugary foods and drinks.
- If prescribed by a doctor, take your medicine to help lower “bad” LDL cholesterol.

# Heart and Brain Health: Things You Can Do

## Blood pressure and atrial fibrillation

**Blood pressure** shows how hard your heart is working.

Blood pressure numbers lower than this help you stay healthy:

**120** Systolic (top) number: pressure in blood vessels when heart beats

**80** Diastolic (bottom) number: pressure in blood vessels between beats

**Atrial fibrillation** is an irregular heartbeat that can make blood clots in your heart. Without medicine, it can cause stroke.

### Tips for better health



- Get your blood pressure checked regularly.

- Aim for 30 minutes of exercise each day.



- Include foods that help keep your heart healthy, like fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.



- If your heartbeat feels irregular, you feel short of breath, a pounding in your chest, like falling, dizzy, lightheaded, or get tired very easily, go to the doctor.



- Take your blood pressure and atrial fibrillation medicine as prescribed.

# Heart and Brain Health: Things You Can Do

## Quit tobacco and limit alcohol



Using commercial tobacco and drinking alcohol can cause blood clots and increase your risk of stroke and heart disease.

People use tobacco in many ways.

Secondhand smoke is being around others who smoke. It can increase your risk of stroke & heart disease.

## Tips for better health

- It's never too late to stop using tobacco. Stopping anytime decreases your risk for stroke.
- If stopping drinking alcohol is not an option, consider drinking less.
- It can be hard to stop using tobacco or drinking alcohol, but help is out there.
- If you need help, talk to your doctor or contact Minnesota Quit Partner at 1-800-784-8669 or visit [quitpartnermn.com](http://quitpartnermn.com).

# Heart and Brain Health: Things You Can Do

## Warning signs of heart attack and stroke

Call **911** right away if you notice any of the following:



- Pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.



- Discomfort in upper body. Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.



- Other signs may include cold sweat, feeling weak, nausea, or lightheadedness.

**STROKE?**  
**DON'T WAIT!**  
**B.E. F.A.S.T.**

Stroke is an Emergency

- B** Balance Loss
- E** Eyesight Changes
- F** Facial Drooping
- A** Arm Weakness
- S** Slurred Speech
- T** Time to call 9-1-1

