



Being Alive

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*Setting the Tone for
Thanksgiving*

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Setting the Tone for Thanksgiving

Parenting today can feel like an uncharted path, full of new unexpected twists and turns. This podcast is a space to exhale, to join a loving space where we bring the wholeness of our human experience to our parenting.

This podcast is two experienced moms with a background in health and wellness having authentic candid conversations about all that informs our parenting- science, spirituality, emotions, intuition, somatics.

We are growing and learning together alongside our kids. Each episode will dive into specific challenges parents face today. Together, we'll explore how to navigate the world of parenting in these challenging times.

<https://www.edgar cayce.org/family-section/listen/creating-calm/>

Thanksgiving Table Grace

For the food that fills us, for the joy that lifts us, for the ties that bind us, and for the love that blesses us, we are so grateful. Amen.

—Rev. Teresa Burton

A Thanksgiving Prayer

On this Thanksgiving Day, I express appreciation for everyone and everything that shares my world. As I bow my head, I open my heart and know that I am truly blessed.

—Veronica Walker-Douglas

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Blessings for Thanksgiving

As we gather together in new and creative ways this holiday season,
We come into awakening to our humanity.
We come into the realization of oneness.
We come into gratitude for the spectrum of diversity.
We come into loving each person as we feel the energetic strands of connection.
Today we create new traditions of thanksgiving and celebration.

—Rev. Sheree Taylor-Jones

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!



Why Eat Winter Crops in Season?

Most things slow down in the cold. Winter veggies keep for a long time in storage (think piles of potatoes and turnips in root cellars). Many can be [preserved](#) through processes like pickling, [lacto-fermenting](#), [dehydrating](#), or freezing. Some [root veggies](#) can even be stored in the soil where they grow – the sweetest carrots and parsnips you’ll ever taste might have been pulled out of frozen ground.

Other veggies thrive in the frigid air even without the benefit of being tucked in all snug under the soil. And some varieties of leafy greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and turnip greens can [survive](#) in medium to heavy frost temperatures and be ready for harvest during the winter months. Kale and collard greens are the chilly cruciferous champions, staying viable down to 20 degrees F. And they don’t need mittens or balaclavas (though they’d sure be cute)!

Winter veggies are a versatile bunch – you can use them in a variety of ways and feature them in all sorts of recipes. They're also nutrient-dense. Roots serve to sustain the plant for long periods of time when photosynthesis is offline, and they sustain the animals and humans who eat them in a similar fashion.

Since winter veggies can be harvested over a wide time frame, it may be possible to pick them on a just-in-time basis, which optimizes their nutrient profile. And like pretty much all vegetables, the winter ones are, in general, good for you, and the more of them you include in your diet, [the better](#). And in a society in which so few people consume enough fruits and vegetables, the winter ones can help provide critical nutrients, including that all-important [fiber](#).

If the label on your food product says “reduced sugar,” **it could contain artificial sweeteners that a new study says may increase your risk of certain heart diseases and stroke.**

Artificial sweeteners can be found in more than 23,000 products, including already sweet foods like canned fruit with “no sugar added.” Although consumption of artificial sweeteners has risen in recent years as people try to cut their sugar intake, **the American Academy of Pediatrics and other organizations have noted a possible connection between these substances and weight gain, diabetes and other health issues.**

Now that this new study connects artificial sweeteners with serious conditions like heart disease and stroke, it’s time for us to act.

https://act.ewg.org/kdgHE55-bkatqGc7Nwr_dQ2?sourceid=1021253&emci=c7069adf-3256-ed11-819c-002248258e08&emdi=ea4d9d0b-4a65-ed11-ade6-14cb65342cd2&ceid=691484

Superfoods for Flu Season

What to eat or drink to build a stronger defense this winter

by Hallie Levine, [AARP](#), Updated October 10, 2022

The saying “you are what you eat” applies to your entire body, but it’s especially important when it comes to your immune system during flu season. “As we get older, our immunity starts to decline, but if we get the right nutrients, we can help our immune systems do their jobs to protect us against viruses like the flu,” says Samantha Heller, a New York City nutritionist.

You can keep it in tip-top shape during this flu season – [which may be a doozy](#) – if you focus on a plant-based diet rich in whole unprocessed foods, Heller says. One of the best eating patterns to illustrate this is the Mediterranean diet, which is rich in fruits, veggies, whole grains, nuts, beans and healthy fats such as fatty fish and olive oil. A [study](#) published in March in the journal *Frontiers in Nutrition* found that people who followed this diet were less likely to become infected by or die from COVID-19, suggesting it [may provide an immune system boost](#) that could protect you from other viral infections, too.

Here, more immunity boosting foods that research, and nutritionists, recommend for right now.

1. Green tea

Whether these particular tea leaves can really fend off the flu has been a source of debate among health researchers for years. But a new [meta-analysis](#) published in July in the journal *Molecules* looked at more than eight studies involving more than 5,000 participants to conclude there really is ample evidence to believe the beverage – and specifically, the catechins that provide its antioxidant power – can help your immune system fend off influenza.

2. Sweet potatoes

They’re a great source of beta carotene, a phytonutrient that helps your body make vitamin A. “It supports respiratory health by increasing the number of immune cells in the body,” explains Anna Taylor, lead outpatient clinical dietitian at the Cleveland Clinic’s Center for Human Nutrition. This is especially important for older adults, as our bodies make fewer immune cells as we age, she adds. Instead of cooking them with butter or brown sugar, Taylor recommends that you roast them with olive oil, oregano and black pepper. “You’ll get additional benefits from the spices, but you’re not loading up on sugar and saturated fat, both of which suppress your immune system,” she says.

3. Berries

They’re a rich source of vitamin C, which stimulates production of infection fighting white blood cells, Taylor says. A 2018 [review](#) of studies found that berries increased levels of disease fighting cells in older adults, such as natural killer cells and T-cells. They also contain flavonoids, substances that have antioxidant properties and protect all your cells – including your immune system cells – from damage, she adds. It’s so easy to incorporate them into your diet: “Add them to your morning yogurt or oatmeal, or even cook them and throw them on your French toast instead of maple syrup,” Taylor recommends.

4. Beans

Chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans, they’re all rich in vitamin B12, a nutrient many older adults are low in, Heller says. “People over the age of 50 don’t absorb vitamin B12 as well in their body, but your immune system needs it to fight disease and repair damaged cells to keep you healthy,” she explains. They’re also high in zinc, which helps boost your body’s production of white blood cells, Taylor says. “Zinc deficiency has been linked to immune system dysfunction,” she says. Taylor recommends at least a half a cup of cooked beans three times a week. You can throw them into soups, chili, salads or even rice dishes. For a healthy crunchy snack, roast chickpeas in some olive oil.

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5. Nuts and seeds

These foods are rich in vitamin E, which plays a key role in your immune system by supporting the growth of T-cells, says Lauri Wright, chair of the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of North Florida. They're also a good source of omega-6 fatty acids. Walnuts are an especially good choice, as research shows they have a very positive effect on your gut microbiome, says Kate Cohen, a registered dietitian nutritionist with the Ellison Institute for Transformative Medicine at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California. They also have more alpha-linolenic acid – an essential fatty acid important for immune function – than any other type of nut.

6. Salmon

It's not plant-based, but it is one of the few foods that provides vitamin D, which plays a huge role in regulating your immune system, says Jennifer McDaniel, owner of McDaniel Nutrition Therapy in Clayton, Missouri. A [2020 study](#) published in the journal *JAMA Network Open* found that people who had untreated vitamin D deficiency were almost twice as likely to test positive for COVID-19 as patients who had sufficient levels of the vitamin. A 6-ounce salmon filet has about 600 IU of vitamin D, which is close to the 800 IU that is recommended for people 70 and older. Another bonus: It's rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which have also been shown to strengthen your immune system.

If you're not a fan of fish, McDaniel suggests marinating it in brown sugar and Dijon mustard for 45 minutes, then throwing it on the grill. "It mellows out that fishy taste, and it gives it a smoky flavor," she explains. Canned salmon counts, too: Throw it over a salad for a quick meal, she says.

7. Garlic

It's rich in a compound called alliin, which may be the source of its immune boosting properties, notes Libby Mills, a Philadelphia nutritionist and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. A [2020 review](#) published in the journal *Medical Hypotheses* found that garlic itself seems to stimulate cells related to immune system function. Another [study](#) published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that people given about 2½ grams of aged garlic extract for 90 days not only had higher levels of immune system cells, but they also had fewer symptoms of cold and flu, and missed fewer workdays due to these respiratory illnesses, than a control group. At the very least, if you eat enough of it, you'll probably keep people away from you, Mills jokes.

Although there's probably not enough research to support taking a garlic supplement, Mills recommends that you cook with it in the colder winter months. You can make your own pasta sauce with tomatoes and garlic, since vitamin C (found in tomatoes) is itself an antioxidant that helps the immune system she says.

8. Kefir

Recent research, including [a 2021 study](#) published in *Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy*, suggests that certain compounds found in fermented dairy such as kefir (which is like a thin yogurt) have anti-inflammatory properties that can help the immune system fight viral infections. The probiotics found in kefir and other fermented foods also help to calm chronic inflammation, [according to Harvard Health](#).

"Fermented dairy is rich in probiotics, which seem to have a positive effect on the immune system," Mills explains.

<https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2021/superfoods-to-fight-flu.html?cmp=EMC-DSM-NLC-OTH-WBLTR-1309502-1598010-6801760-NA-110522-Webletter-MS4-NA-NA-TM60-Health&encparam=Qn45THguLGvUEOYh9mCNWpL5mM7OEtv5lluy56gbM1w%3d>

Concord Startup is Diverting Supermarket Food Waste to Generate Clean Power

By [Aaron Pressman](#) Globe Staff, Updated October 24, 2022, 4:59 p.m.

Wasted food that was collected from Divert's retail customers awaited processing at an anaerobic digestion facility in Freetown. Divert processes more than 232,000 tons of wasted food a year at its 10 facilities across the country. Divert

Ryan Begin, chief executive and cofounder of Concord-based startup Divert, sometimes has to take on the role of grocery store detective.

Recently, he was standing in a produce section watching a store associate shelving iceberg lettuce. The associate was throwing one out of every six heads into a box for damaged produce, which ultimately ended up in the food waste stream that Divert recycles.

Wasted food is a surprisingly large culprit in global warming, responsible for 7 percent of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. In the United States, food loss and waste are responsible for 170 million metric tons of greenhouse gas, [equal to the annual output](#) of 42 coal-fired energy plants, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Divert's aim is to help the grocery industry reduce its food waste by 50 percent by 2030, consistent with US and [United Nations](#) goals. Stores send Divert expired and damaged items, which the company sorts with optical scanning technology. Edible goods are sent to food pantries, while other waste is converted into renewable energy.

So, even as the company has found ways to turn food waste into a renewable energy source, Begin is seeking to reduce the amount of waste produced by the grocery industry at every turn.

In the case of the 17 percent lettuce waste, the associate hadn't been trained properly on identifying damaged vegetables and decided on his own to toss one out of six, Begin said.

Whenever Divert detects a repeated pattern, as with the lettuce, the company investigates.

In another case, associates at a national pharmacy chain were pulling boxes of Tazo Tea off the shelves because they confused a "produced on" date with the "sell by" date. Divert's systems sent the boxes to food pantries, but the pharmacy chain was needlessly losing money. Begin let them know about the issue.

For food waste that cannot be diverted to food banks or other uses, Divert turns it into clean energy via a process called anaerobic digestion. Food waste is combined with bacteria, which turn the waste into renewable natural gas, or RNG, which can be used to produce electricity, heat homes, or power vehicles.

With 250 employees, Divert now operates 10 plants processing 232,000 tons of wasted food per year from more than 5,000 retail stores.

Reducing waste at the retail level, as Divert does, is one of the most promising strategies for cutting overall food waste, according to Emily Broad Leib, founding director of the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic.

"Focusing on retail seems really promising," she said. "All of the food that's there, at the right moment, is safe and fresh and ready to be sold.... So for them, focusing on the retail sector is really genius."

Divert's plants are producing enough RNG to attract a big partner. Global energy giant BP this month agreed to buy \$175 million worth of Divert's RNG. The renewable gas production will offset almost 40,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year, the company said.

Divert's focus is still on reducing the overall amount of waste sent to landfills rather than energy production. "We don't think about RNG as a product," he said. "The energy is a byproduct of what we do."

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Begin, who grew up in Maine, worked in the hydrogen production industry after getting a degree in electrical engineering at Clarkson University. A few years later, while working at Raytheon, he met Nick Whitman and they came up with the idea for Divert. (Whitman is the chief operating officer.)

The company, originally called Feed Resource Recovery, got its start in 2007 behind a grocery store in Burlington.

In 2014, Massachusetts legislators passed a law limiting the amount of food waste that companies could put in the trash. So Divert [built a plant in Freetown](#) to convert expired food from 200 regional Stop & Shops into energy to power the grocery chain's distribution center there.

Stop & Shop aims to send zero food waste to landfills by 2025 and reduce by 50 percent the amount of food waste by 2030. The company works with food banks and an app called Flashfood to distribute food that's still safe to be eaten. "From there anything that is unsellable and not donatable, that's where we look to send it to our digester," Stop & Shop spokeswoman Jennifer Brogan said.

Divert was acquired last year by private equity firm Ara Partners, in a deal that pumped \$100 million into the company.

The 2021 funding will allow Begin to open more plants and continue hiring, he said. "We are growing very fast and going aggressively."

Only nine states, including Massachusetts, have enacted food waste disposal bans, but many more are considering adopting similar laws, Broad Leib said.

"There's growing demand and a growing number of businesses that have food waste goals," she said. "So it's a great time to get into this space."

RECENTLY SHARED WITH US

Reformulated Products even at Whole Foods to save money during inflation, this is terrible, take a look:

https://www.google.com/search?q=companies+switching+recipes+to+cheaper+ingredients+nbc&client=safari&channel=iphone_bm&prmd=bnsiv&source=lnms&tbm=vid&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiRLZOQ9677AhUlkokEHZwqB6kQ_AUoBXoECAEQBQ&biw=375&bih=630&dpr=3#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:c62f2dc3,vid:Oefvflolq7E

Here are the Facts Feel Free to Share with Everyone in your Community:

1. We are in the middle of a worldwide inflation crisis caused by a worldwide pandemic PLUS a war between the two largest countries in Europe. The last time a European country invaded another European country, the result was that inflation wasn't on anyone's mind. (WWII) (remember the sacrifices made by Americans for that war!)

At a time when corporations should be working together to alleviate the costs of this war globally and in the US:

2. Corporate America has purposefully created this inflation "crisis" by taking advantage of the pandemic and the war as an excuse to raise prices on the average consumer. The result: Less money in the average person's pocket – and record profits posted by numerous companies over the past two years. It's been one of the biggest ruses in history. It's the 1% having pledged their loyalty to make the 1% richer, are counting on us being too stupid to figure it out.

3. How good has it been for the wealthy while a plague killed over one million of us? Yeah their losing some stock value, but nothing like the everyday expenses that the middle and poverty classes are facing

The five big oil companies raised prices at gas pumps and that made them a whopping \$59 billion in profits – that's just during the 2nd quarter of this year!

Grocery prices were jacked up by over 33% last year and are expected to go up another 23% this year – making Big Food and Big Agra-billionaires a monstrous \$382 billion richer during the pandemic, while the public was forced to feed their families less when they desperately needed to stay healthy in order to avoid the deadly virus.

In a year when Americans needed more health care than ever before, Big Pharma decided to make a killing by charging Americans the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. Three of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the U.S. - Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and Abbott - made out like bandits, increasing their profits in just one year by 90% to over \$54 billion.

And during last year, it was reported that 46% of all Americans either skipped or delayed the healthcare they needed because they could not afford it – because 85 million of them were uninsured or underinsured – while the six largest health insurance companies in America made over \$60 billion in profits!

So why is it that in the polls, Many of the 1% do not vote for Democrats because they do not want to lose their wealth. Republicans always end up winning the question of "Which party do you trust more with the economy?" Especially when it's the Democrats who will create a living wage, will continue the \$300 child tax credit – which slashed the child poverty rate by over 40% – will create paid family leave for all workers, and on and on. Which party's policies will put more money in the average Joe's pocket?

So Republicans think this is how they're going to win next month. With the mob that made the rich richer? The protectors of wealth and power? Pah-lease.

I wish I wrote this, but I excerpted and edited it to reach my friends and family at this critical time. Vote for people who will work for the American middle class and poverty class, which simply means keeping it fair for anyone under the 1%.

(Excerpted from Michael Moore)

*What Should be
included in Your
First Aid Kit*

What should be included in your first aid kit?

- **Hand sanitizer** - we should all have lots of this on hand from the pandemic. Remember to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before tending to an injury!
- **Wound care supplies** - Cuts, scrapes, and burns are among the most common injuries you might experience in your home. Keep your first aid kit well stocked with the following items:

For cleaning wounds:

- Antiseptic wipes
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Spray bottle of saline wound cleanser

For treating wounds:

- Antibiotic ointment
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Aloe vera gel
- Calamine lotion

For dressing wounds:

- Adhesive bandages of various sizes
- Non-stick sterile gauze pads
- Latex-free adhesive bandage tape
- Elastic (ACE) bandage wraps

- **Over-the-counter medications (OTCs)** - Always check with your healthcare provider if you have any questions about whether you should take any of these medications.
 - Ibuprofen
 - Acetaminophen
 - Aspirin
 - Antihistamines (Benadryl® or generic diphenhydramine)
 - Antacids
 - Cold medications
 - Bismuth tablets (for nausea or diarrhea)
 - Laxatives for constipation
 - Loperamide for diarrhea

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- **Prescription Medications** - Keeping a small supply of your regular medications can be helpful in the event of an emergency, such as a blizzard or other natural disaster. Also, keep a list of your current medications and dosing in your first-aid kit. If you have a [MyHealth Online](#) account, you can access your medication list online, or your Atrius Health pharmacy can print a list for you!
- **Instant heat and cold packs**
- **Other household items:**
 - Latex-free exam gloves
 - Cotton balls/swabs
 - Thermometer
 - Tweezers (for removing splinters)
 - Scissors
 - First aid manual
 - LED flashlight with extra batteries
 - Cell phone charger
 - List of emergency contacts, including your primary care provider, pediatrician, and local police and fire departments

Consider keeping a first aid kit in your home and one in your car, and make sure all members of your household know where it is. Keep your kit where it's easily accessible but out of the reach of young children. For older children, make sure they know the location of the kit, can safely reach it, and know what to do in the event of an accident or emergency.

Other things to consider when assembling your first aid kit

Age of those in your household. With young children, keeping lots of wound cleaning and bandaging supplies is especially important with all the cuts and scrapes! If elderly relatives live with you or visit often, having aspirin in your kit is important in case of a heart attack.

Medical history of members of your household. If anyone in your family has an anaphylactic allergy, keeping a spare epinephrine pen in your kit is essential. However, it should not be the ONLY pen in the house.

Keep your kit updated! Pick a date and make it an annual event to check the contents of your equipment and replace expired medications or items you have used throughout the year.

Everything From bad Sleep to Stress can Hurt your Heart and Wreck your Health

by Jeanette Beebe, [AARP](#), Updated October 5, 2022

RoxiRosita / Getty Images

[En español](#)

There's good news and bad news when it comes to your risk of developing heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the U.S. Let's start with the bad. Several factors raise a person's risk for getting heart disease – a term used to describe a range of conditions that affect the heart – including some that can't be controlled, such as family history, and others that are more complex, like having access to [good-for-you foods](#) and safe, affordable housing.

That said, there's a lot you *can* do to prevent heart disease and, in certain cases, reverse it. Some of these actions, however difficult to achieve, are obvious: Get active, eat better, lose weight, and stop smoking. "Lifestyle changes are difficult for everyone," concedes Sabra Lewsey, M.D., a cardiologist and assistant professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins Medicine, "but they are profoundly important and can make lifesaving gains in your health."

Here are 10 habits to avoid if you're hoping to improve your heart health.

1. Being a couch potato

Not moving enough, especially on a regular basis, is risky for your health. Inactivity has been linked to cognitive decline, more frailty and even an increased risk of death. Fortunately, almost any sort of activity that raises your heart rate is a good place to start.

It's important to move your body and elevate your heart rate for at least 150 minutes every week. You should also throw in twice-weekly strength training sessions, according to the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#), established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

That may seem like a lot of exercise, but it doesn't need to be done all at once. As long as you get your heart rate up for 15 minutes or more at a time, it counts. Also, "activity" doesn't just mean a walk or a gym class or a bike ride. It could be gardening, shopping, walking the dog or cleaning.

"You don't have to go from doing nothing to running marathons," says Quentin Youmans, M.D., a cardiology fellow at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "In fact, the biggest leap in benefit comes from doing nothing to doing something. Just start by dedicating yourself to doing some activity every day to get your body moving."

Yet a [2014 survey](#) found that over a quarter (27.5 percent) of people older than 50 said they did no physical activity (other than their job) in the past month. Among the older age group – 75 years and up – just over one-third (35.3 percent) of people said the same thing.

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2. Drinking too much alcohol

"Not everyone recognizes the connection between heart health and alcohol," Youmans says. But [drinking too much alcohol](#) can raise blood pressure, cause irregular heartbeats "and even have a direct toxic effect on the heart."

In fact, imbibing too much "can lead to heart failure or a weakening of the heart," says Amber Johnson, M.D., a cardiologist and assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

How much is too much? Women should have up to one drink per day, and men should limit their intake to two drinks or fewer, according to HHS guidelines.

3. Skimping on sleep

Not getting your seven (or eight or nine) hours of shut-eye a night will slowly, but quite reliably, damage your health, [including your heart](#).

"Poor-quality sleep or untreated [sleep apnea](#) can lead to high blood pressure and affect heart health," Lewsey cautions. Lack of sleep has also been associated with diabetes and weight gain, which negatively affect heart health, too.

What's more, sleep apnea can "cause abnormal heart rhythms," Johnson points out.

4. Opting for unhealthy foods

A [heart-healthy diet](#) includes a panoply of delicious options: fruits, vegetables, lean protein, nuts and whole grains. Data suggest that a so-called Mediterranean diet – mostly plants, with "good fats" like walnuts, almonds, olive oil and avocados – supports good heart health. This style of eating limits red meat; fish and poultry are OK, as long as you keep these proteins to under 5.5 ounces per day.

[Swap sodas for water](#) – a lot of water. Watch out for processed, sugary and fried foods, and be mindful of what you eat and drink at restaurants. Food full of saturated and trans fats, salt and cholesterol is best reserved for special occasions, rather than on the daily.

"Avoiding high sodium is really important," Johnson adds. The American Heart Association recommends that most adults consume fewer than 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day, with [2,300 mg as an upper limit](#).

Pay attention to those numbers from your routine blood tests, too. Watch out for an excess of bad cholesterol (LDL) and/or triglycerides and not enough good cholesterol (HDL). Also, high blood sugar can damage your blood vessels. In fact, people with diabetes are twice as likely to develop heart disease; plus, they're more likely to experience heart failure.

So try not to "overindulge with food," Youmans warns. "We all love that slice of pizza or juicy hamburger, and, in fact, occasionally, those foods can be OK. But when our diets consist of foods high in fats and sugars all the time, it starts to affect our heart health negatively. A Mediterranean diet is a great alternative," he says, adding that it can be tasty.

5. Living a lonely life

It's so important to have a group of friends and family to lean on. Unfortunately, it's not as common as you may think. More than one-third of adults 45 and older are lonely, and nearly one-fourth of those 65-plus are considered to be socially isolated, research shows. This circumstance is often terrible for your health, including your heart.

That's why it's crucial to find a group of people who will support you and make you feel fulfilled. Try to "seek community resources and support groups to help you with these lifestyle changes," Lewsey says, and work to "build a network of support" to help you along the way.

Some populations are more at risk for [social isolation](#), including immigrants, LGBTQ individuals, minorities and victims of elder abuse, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Ideally, the health system would be set up to be more inclusive, Johnson says, so "we are better able to provide services ... that are culturally sensitive, so that we can reach more people."

The CDC lists a number of [resources](#) that people who are feeling lonely or socially isolated can use. Among them is AARP and its [Community Connections](#) tool, which works to connect adults with others in their community.

Vaccines and Heart Health

Vaccines don't just help fight off some pretty nasty illnesses. Research suggests they can also help protect your heart.

- A [study](#) published in the American Heart Association journal *Stroke* found that people who were hospitalized for a flu-like illness were 38 percent more likely than adults hospitalized for other reasons to have a stroke within a month of their hospitalization. What's more, receiving a flu vaccine within the year prior to hospitalization lowered a person's stroke risk to 11 percent.
- A [study](#) published in the journal *Circulation* found that people with heart failure who got an annual flu vaccine were 18 percent less likely to die from cardiovascular disease or any other cause than those who didn't get their flu shot.
- A [study](#) presented at the American Heart Association's International Stroke Conference in 2021 found that the shingles vaccine may reduce stroke risk by about 16 percent in older adults.
- A [study](#) published in *JAMA Network* found that full vaccination against COVID-19 was associated with a reduced risk of heart attack and ischemic stroke after a coronavirus infection.

6. Smoking tobacco

Whether you vape or smoke cigarettes or cigars, tobacco is terrible for your health. Secondhand tobacco smoke is, too. Most people know this, but what you may not realize is that tobacco doesn't just ravage your lungs and cause cancer: Your heart is also a victim.

"Even in someone who has been a long-term smoker, there are immediate and long-lasting cardiovascular benefits of [quitting smoking](#)," Lewsey says.

Tobacco damages blood vessels and causes plaque buildup (atherosclerosis), which can trigger a heart attack, abnormal heart rhythms and, eventually, heart failure.

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What can you do? "Set a quit date," Youmans says. "Let your friends and/or loved ones know so that they can hold you accountable, and use nicotine replacement or other medicines to help you quit with the help of your doctor."

You can find tips and other help on the [CDC's website](#).

7. Minimizing your mental health

Managing your stress is key for maintaining good health. If anxiety gets out of control, we're more likely to do things that are damaging. What's more, stress raises your blood pressure. To combat this, try to [find something you enjoy](#) that will help you calm down and breathe better. For some people, it's [meditating](#). Others enjoy hiking, cooking or playing board games with friends.

Can anxiety or panic attacks damage your heart? Not usually. Rarely, though, heartbreak can truly hurt your ticker. The condition is colloquially known as [broken heart syndrome](#), and it's "a type of heart failure," Johnson explains. "If you are under very intense stress, like if you are in a car crash or your loved one dies suddenly, that can cause a weakening of the heart," she says.

The solution is often medication (such as beta blockers) plus a plan to manage stress in a healthy way.

8. Waiting to lose weight

Carrying around extra weight, especially around your waist, is bad for your heart.

Obesity itself is a risk factor for heart disease. Researchers have found that the heavier you are, the higher your risk is for heart disease – it's a so-called silent heart injury, even if you feel healthy, even if your numbers look good.

It's also true that being overweight or obese can spike your cholesterol levels, your blood sugar, your triglycerides and your blood pressure. All of these factors damage your heart and raise your risk for developing heart disease. Obesity is commonly linked with diabetes, as well.

"One tip is to buy a scale, as knowledge is power, and this will help you keep track," Youmans suggests. "To help to move the scale in the right direction, remember that you need to burn more calories than you consume, so try getting more active and eating fewer calories."

Your doctor may track your [body mass index](#) (BMI), which has been cited as an imperfect and even problematic metric. No matter how you track it, if you're overweight or obese, a 5 percent to 7 percent [weight loss](#) will likely have a positive impact on your health, including the numbers that affect your heart: blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar (including diabetes).

9. Neglecting your teeth

Though a clear scientific [link between dental hygiene and coronary health](#) hasn't been established (it's still an open question), some researchers say there is an association between the two. That is, poor oral health often means poor heart health. Gum disease is associated with heart disease, and bacterial infections and inflammation appear to play a part, too.

"Good dental health, with regular cleanings, is also important [for] overall heart health," Lewsey says.

Despite that benefit, nearly 40 percent of people 65 and older haven't seen a dentist in the past year, according to a 2016 "National Health Interview Survey."

(continued on following page)

10 Worst Habits for your
Heart

10. Giving up too soon

Good heart health is often difficult to achieve and even harder to maintain – especially when everyone around you is continuing to do things you know aren't good for you.

"A lot of these [health behaviors](#) that we have found to be important vary from community to community or culture to culture," says Johnson, who works in Pittsburgh. "Certain cultures may not eat the foods that are considered heart-healthy [...] so there may be some disparities."

Above all, it's important not to give up. And, hey, try to be patient.

"Habit change is hard," Youmans says. "It can take some time to break them, particularly if they are enjoyable."

He adds, "Anything that is worth having, takes time. Making a small change that you can sustain for a long period is much more important than a bigger change that may be harder to sustain."

And every day is an opportunity to get healthier, whether it's walking past the candy jar, meditating or taking the stairs. Make your lunch the night before, instead of grabbing fast food. Set up a weekly social group. Get [15 more minutes of sleep](#). Do it again, again and again.

Editor's Note: This story, originally published Nov. 8, 2021, has been updated to include new information on the link between vaccines and heart health.

LINKS CANBE FOUND HERE: <https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2021/avoiding-unhealthy-heart-habits.html?cmp=EMC-DSM-NLC-OTH-WBLTR-1309502-1598009-6782522-NA-102922-Webletter-MS1-NA-NA-TM60-Health&encparam=Qn45THguLGvUEOYh9mCNWpL5mM7OEtv5lluy56gbM1w%3d>

Monday, October 31

"Humanity in its former state, or natural state, or permanent consciousness, *is* soul."

ECRL 262-89

Tuesday, November 1

"*Do what you know to do, to be right! Then leave it alone! The Creator gives the increase! Worry and anxiety will only produce disorder in your own mind!*"

Sunday, November 6

"But hope and trust and faith in the divine within—the revivifying, the rejuvenating of that spirit of life and truth within every atom of the body. This will put to flight all of those things that hinder a body from giving expression of the most hopeful, the most beautiful."

ECRL 572-5

Thursday, November 10

"Music should be a part of each soul's development."

Edgar Cayce reading 2780-3

Friday, November 11

"After breakfast, work a while, after lunch rest a while, after dinner walk a mile."

Edgar Cayce reading 3624-1

Evolutions in Being

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