

# HEALTHY HEART NEWS

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St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital's Cardiovascular Institute is committed to you and our community. We pride ourselves on being an engaged partner with the many constituencies that we serve. As part of our commitment to meeting your heart health needs, we have developed this quarterly newsletter filled with information that can improve the quality of, and in some cases, help save your life. If there are topics that you would like to see covered in future editions, please e-mail Beverly Keefer, Director of Cardiovascular Services, Cardiac Cath and Interventional Radiology at [bkeefer@slchospital.org](mailto:bkeefer@slchospital.org).

## HEART HEALTH — IT'S A NUMBERS GAME!

Many things such as cholesterol, blood pressure, weight and glucose are key indicators of your heart health. That is why making sure you monitor these is an important part of your care. The numbers that are important to know are:

**BLOOD PRESSURE:** High blood pressure is a serious condition that can lead to coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure and other health problems. Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps blood. If this pressure rises, and stays high over time, it can damage the body in many ways.

**CHOLESTEROL:** Cholesterol is a fatty substance that is found in animal-based foods such as meat, poultry, egg yolks and whole milk. You can not tell if the cholesterol in your blood is high by how you feel, so a simple blood test is necessary to check the numbers. When you have heart disease, this test helps your doctor measure how well your risk factors are being controlled. You may be able to lower your cholesterol with a combination of diet and exercise to facilitate weight loss. You may also need to take medicine to lower your cholesterol.

**BODY MASS INDEX:** Your BMI compares your height to your weight, letting you know whether you are considered healthy, overweight or obese. A BMI of more than 30 is concerning and requires a follow up with your physician.

**GLUCOSE:** Blood glucose is the main sugar found in your blood. It comes from the food you eat, and is your body's primary energy source. Diabetes is a disease in which your blood sugar levels are too high. Over time, having too much glucose in your blood can cause serious problems.

It is important to get regularly scheduled health checks. Every year ask your doctor about a wellness check. Depending on your risk factors, you may need to have certain things examined more than once a year.

## THE ABC'S OF LOWERING YOUR RISK OF HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have set a nationwide goal to help prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes. These agencies with other federal and private organizations such as the AHA are using education campaigns, health care technology and additional tools to take strides against stroke and heart disease.

Every year more than 2 million Americans have a heart attack or stroke and every day more than 2,200 U.S. residents die from cardiovascular disease. Heart disease and stroke are the first and fourth leading causes of death, respectively, in the United States. The good news is that you can take steps to help prevent these conditions.

- A** *Appropriate Aspirin Therapy:* Aspirin can help people who have suffered a heart attack or stroke and it may help even prevent these conditions. The use of Aspirin should be discussed with your medical doctor
- B** *Blood Pressure Control:* Have your blood pressure checked regularly. Take steps to control it if it is high
- C** *Cholesterol Management:* Managing cholesterol levels can slow, decrease or even stop plaque buildup in arteries which lowers cardiovascular risks.
- S** *Stop Smoking:* The long list of health hazards linked to smoking includes, heart disease, stroke, and cancers. People of all ages can reap health benefits by quitting smoking.



## HEALTHY HEART SUMMER SNACK TIPS

Summer brings an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables to grocery stores, farmers' markets and local gardens which means more opportunities to add tasty and heart-healthy foods to your everyday meals.

Strawberries, tomatoes, cantaloupe, and other seasonal produce, taste good and help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke

Snacking isn't "bad" if you do it in moderation and make healthy choices. Healthy, good-for-you snacks can be a part of a healthy diet – which you need to do to live healthfully.

To snack the sensible way, choose these nutrient-rich snacks:

- | <b>Crunchy</b>  | <b>Munchy</b>   | <b>Sweet</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apples and Breadsticks</li><li>• Carrot and celery sticks</li><li>• Green pepper sticks</li><li>• Zucchini circles</li><li>• Radishes</li><li>• Broccoli spears</li><li>• Cauliflower</li><li>• Unsalted rice cakes</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unsalted sunflower seeds</li><li>• Whole-grain breads</li><li>• Cherry or grape tomatoes</li><li>• Low-fat or fat-free cheese</li><li>• Plain, low-fat or fat-free yogurt</li><li>• Bagels</li><li>• Unsalted almonds, walnuts and other nuts</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unsweetened canned fruit</li><li>• Thin slice of angel food cake</li><li>• Baked apple</li><li>• Raisins</li><li>• Dried fruit gelatin gems</li><li>• Frozen bananas</li><li>• Frozen grapes</li><li>• Fresh fruit</li><li>• Low-fat or fat-free unsweetened fruit yogurt</li></ul> |

**Compare nutrition labels:** Choose products with the lowest amounts of sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.

## MENDED HEARTS SUPPORT GROUP

Going through a heart event can be a challenge. With one in four people in the United States suffering from heart disease, and over three-quarters of a million people experiencing a heart attack, patients and families need support more than ever. The Mended Hearts support is a valuable resource that will help patients through their recovery journey. Starting this summer, trained accredited visitors will be available to help St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital patients. Volunteers are available to visit or offer information.

It is very common for patients and their families to have questions following diagnosis, treatment or surgery for heart disease. Along with physicians and staff, Mended Hearts is available for support and encouragement. The mission of the organization is to inspire hope and improve quality of life for heart patients and their families through ongoing peer-to-peer support. The group also has meetings scheduled the third Sunday of every month at 1:30 p.m., at SLCH's Cornwall campus. If you are interested in speaking with someone from Mended Hearts, please call (845) 913-5631 or (845) 863-7408.

## ST. LUKE'S CORNWALL HEALTH SYSTEM FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT CARDIOVASCULAR INSTITUTE

The St. Luke's Cornwall Health System Foundation will welcome more than 200 friends and neighbors to the Powelton Club in Newburgh on Thursday, June 29, when it hosts its annual Golf and Tennis Outing. This year's event is in support of the St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital Cardiovascular Institute. All net proceeds from the event will be used to enhance the services and equipment needed for this program.