

Steps To Get Your Heart Healthy

February is the month that we celebrate **LOVE** with chocolates, candlelit dinners, and bouquets of roses, but before those candies melt, or the flowers fade, it's important to think about our beating hearts, because February is also Heart Health Awareness Month, and what better time to get serious about prevention.

Did you know that after the age of twenty our vascular systems begin to accumulate plaque? Tiny plaque deposits can embed themselves into our delicate vascular structure throughout our entire bodies. Over time the sticky plaque can mount up and cause hardening of the arteries, block oxygen-rich blood from reaching our hearts, or cause clots to form and break off.

If we fail to put our health in the forefront, we will very likely be in danger of issues such as a stroke, heart disease, or sudden cardiac arrest. If you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, or a family history of vascular disorders, you are at an even higher risk level. If you smoke, drink too much alcohol, are sedentary, or regularly eat "junk food," then your risk factors are ultimately elevated.

What can you do? Notably, you should schedule an exam with your physician to check your vitals and run the appropriate lab tests. You may need to have other types of testing if your report shows signs of any issues. Some of these tests may include a Doppler, which is a vascular ultrasound, an MRA, angiogram, or an EKG.

Small lifestyle changes can make the biggest impact on your overall health, and since it's February and we're valuing our hearts along with our Valentine, this acronym might be just the thing to get you taking the appropriate steps towards a stronger heart.

L-Live a healthier you
O-Overcome bad habits
V-Value your vascular system
E-Exercise is essential

L-Live a healthier you:

Start to incorporate healthier foods like vegetables, fruit, and fish into your diet; avoid excess saturated fats and processed foods. Take the time to decompress and relieve any stress that you may have from your daily life.

O-Overcome bad habits:

Stop smoking! Smoking is one of the most damaging habits that contribute to the production of plaque along with many other debilitating issues. If you drink, do so in moderation. Excessive drinking leads to a breakdown of the vascular system and can lead to stroke.

V-Value your vascular system:

Make an appointment with your physician to have the proper testing done and adhere to your doctor's advice, whether it's a diet and exercise program alone, or one that's coupled with the necessary prescription medication to get your cholesterol down or your blood pressure under control.

E-Exercise is essential:

Exercise is extremely helpful in our heart health. Even simply taking a quick paced walk is beneficial for our cardiac condition, by supplying our blood with the oxygen it needs. Exercise can also help to lower cholesterol and blood pressure, reduce anxiety, and the added advantage is that it can help you lose a few pounds as well.

You should always consult with your physician first before embarking on any new diet or exercise program. Hardening of the arteries cannot be reversed, but with the proper lifestyle changes, and medication, you can enjoy a healthier life and stave off any heart issues through these preventative measures.

At **Cardiac Care Group**, they take your symptoms seriously and are prepared to see you and to discuss your conditions. They specialize in providing a broad range of services that focus on the prevention, prompt diagnosis and state-of-the-art treatment of cardiovascular disease.

Joseph Freedman, M.D.

Dr. Freedman brings many years of experience as a cutting edge cardiologist specializing in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all cardiac disease. He trained at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic, continually ranked #1 in Cardiovascular Care, where he focused on cardiac imaging. He achieved five board certifications in Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Comprehensive Adult ECHO, Nuclear Cardiology and Cardiac CT. During his tenure as the lead noninvasive cardiologist at Florida Medical Center in Ft. Lauderdale, he helped lead the hospital to achieve Level 5 chest pain certification, the highest designation of cardiac excellence.

Please call Dr. Freedman's Office at (239) 574-8463 to make your appointment today.

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