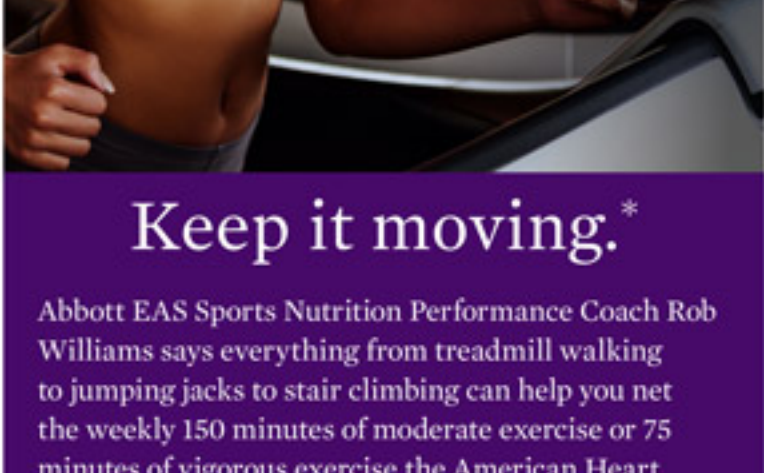




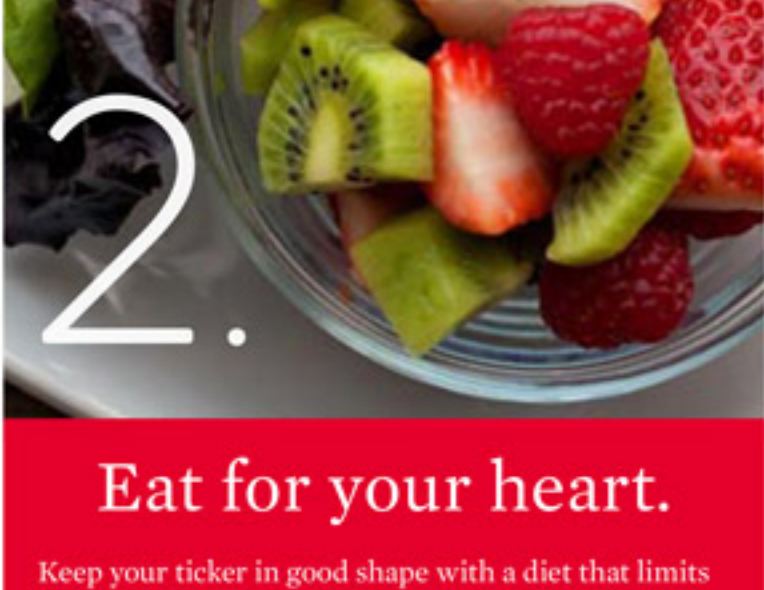
Ladies, Get Smart About Your Heart

Heart disease is an equal opportunity threat, as it's the No. 1 cause of death of men and women worldwide. But gender matters when it comes to its symptoms and some risk factors, including diabetes, smoking, stress, and menopause. The good news is that you can take proactive steps to fight heart disease before it begins – and many of these are lifestyle changes. Here, seven ways Abbott experts say women can protect their hearts year-round.



1. Keep it moving.*

Abbott EAS Sports Nutrition Performance Coach Rob Williams says everything from treadmill walking to jumping jacks to stair climbing can help you net the weekly 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise the American Heart Association recommends.



2. Eat for your heart.

Keep your ticker in good shape with a diet that limits saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugar. Abbott registered dietitian Abby Sauer suggests recipe swaps (think sweet potatoes for white) to increase your intake of vitamins and nutrients.



3. Watch your weight.*

Cutting calories and boosting exercise is key to keeping pounds off, cholesterol levels in check, and preventing Type 2 diabetes. Dr. Jennifer Jones-McMeans of Abbott's vascular business says even small things help, like adding extra steps at work rather than sitting all day.



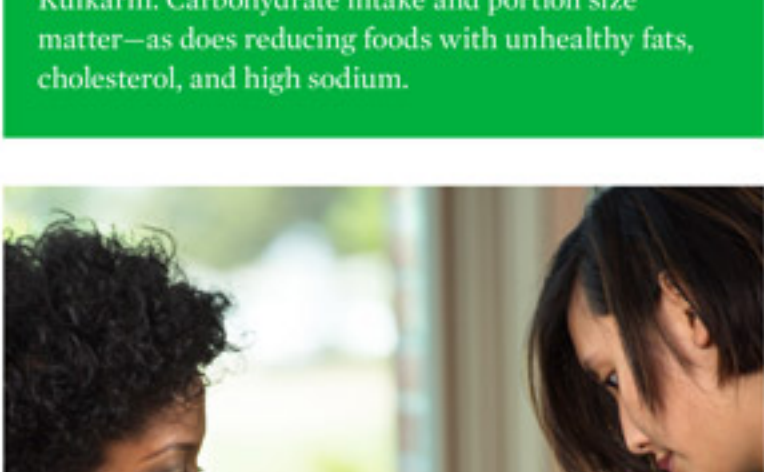
4. Keep blood pressure down.

Left untreated, high blood pressure can cause everything from a stroke to heart failure. Abbott Medical Director Dr. Olga Carron stresses the importance of taking medicines as prescribed—as well as improving your diet and boosting your physical activity, as losing weight can help lower blood pressure.



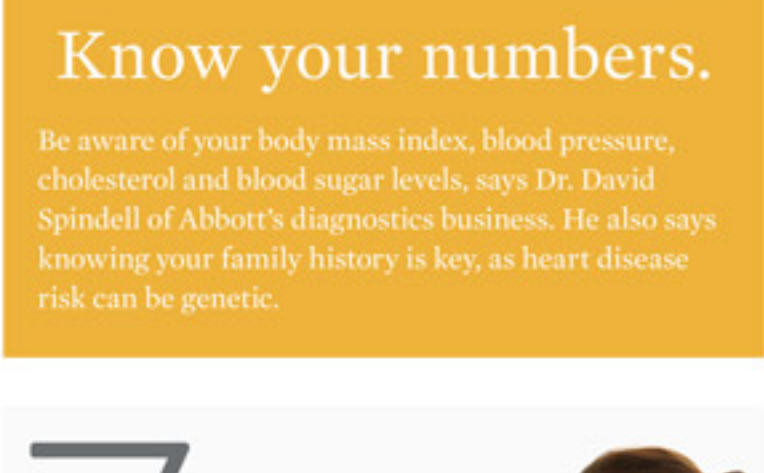
5. Manage diabetes or prevent it.*

Diabetes doubles your risk for heart attack or stroke, says Abbott Scientific Affairs Director Karmeen Kulkarni. Carbohydrate intake and portion size matter—as does reducing foods with unhealthy fats, cholesterol, and high sodium.



6. Know your numbers.

Be aware of your body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, says Dr. David Spindell of Abbott's diagnostics business. He also says knowing your family history is key, as heart disease risk can be genetic.



7. Keep stress in check.*

Chronic stress can lead to behaviors like smoking, drinking, and poor eating habits as well as changes to your blood and nervous system, which the World Heart Federation says can increase heart disease risk. Physical exercise can help combat stress by releasing the feel-good chemical dopamine, says Abbott's Rob Williams, as can activities that let your mind relax.

*Not all exercises are suitable for everyone. Before engaging in any physical activity, please consult with your health care professional about how much and what kind of physical activity is right for you.