



Making *Life Easier*™

## ***Love Your Heart!***



The New Year is here, and people everywhere have made resolutions to eat better, lose weight and quit smoking. Unfortunately, the majority of them will only make it until February before they resume their old habits and revert to a more sedentary lifestyle. Whether their plan is too ambitious or life simply gets in the way, the excitement of a fresh start begins to fade and motivation wanes.

Such major lifestyle changes require steady determination to maintain. Unfortunately, it often takes a health scare or serious diagnosis for people with poor health habits to realize their risks and commit to change if they want to celebrate another birthday, participate in a child's wedding or be active in the life of a grandchild.



February is Heart Health Awareness Month, and Home Helpers is supporting the cause by stressing the importance of pursuing a [healthy lifestyle](#) starting now. Why is heart health so important?

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States.
- In the U.S., someone has a heart attack every 34 seconds.
- Each minute, someone in the U.S. dies from a heart disease-related event.
- 19% of people age 45 and older have circulatory disease.
- 30% of people age 65 and older have circulatory disease.

"Too often, we take our health for granted. We wake up every morning, tend to our personal affairs and go to work, not giving much thought to our ability to manage our daily living activities," said Mary Doepke, RN, Owner of Home Helpers of Hinsdale.

"The advice for becoming more 'heart-healthy' may sound familiar, yet heart disease remains America's biggest killer, taking more lives than accidents and cancer combined," said Doepke. "Home Helpers and our trained caregivers are dedicated to working with families each day to help prevent this deadly disease."

### **Heart Facts**

The heart is an essential part of our body's circulatory system, pumping blood through the human body via blood vessels to supply the nutrients and oxygen necessary for our body to function.



## Pop Quiz



**Q: The heart is one of six vital organs. Do you know the other five?**

*Find the answers at the end of this article.*

### Did You Know?

- The heart muscle beats about 100,000 times a day.
- A normal adult heart circulates over 1 gallon of oxygenated blood throughout the body every minute.
- On average, a person's heart beats 60-100 times per minute, also known as one's heart rate.
- A person's heart beat increases and decreases according to activity level.

If a person's heart rate is too fast or too slow, or blood is pumped with too much force (hypertension) or not enough force (hypotension), a person may experience heart-related problems. Likewise, anything that reduces blood flow (e.g., plaque buildup in the arteries) is a potential problem as a person's body may not get the oxygenated blood it needs to function. More than 30% of adults exhibit risk factors, such as inactivity, obesity and high blood pressure, and more than 15% have high cholesterol and/or smoke cigarettes. High blood pressure is often referred to as the "silent killer" because one may not exhibit any symptoms until it's too late. Schedule a physical exam with your doctor to access any unseen risk factors.

### Preventative Measures

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, research shows lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels can reduce the risk of developing a heart condition, having a heart attack, needing bypass surgery and dying from heart disease. While it may sound like a broken record, the most effective preventative measures to reduce your risk of circulatory diseases are:

- Regular physical activity
- Healthy diet
- Quitting smoking
- Cutting back on alcohol
- Reducing stress
- Adequate sleep

To determine how much physical activity you need, the CDC shares recommendations for adults and seniors on its website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html>. For menu planners and healthy eating guidelines visit <http://www.mypyramid.gov/>, a service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Don't put off healthy lifestyle changes. Your New Year's resolution really could save your life!

**Pop Quiz Answers:** *Our six vital organs are the heart, brain, lungs, kidneys, liver and pancreas.*

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**HOME HELPERS** – *Making Life Easier* Home Helpers offers quality non-medical and personal care\* and companionship services similar to the care and support often provided by family members. Our flexible care plans are tailored to fit our clients' specific needs and budgets. Compassionate Care is a bi-monthly newsletter produced by Home Helpers. We hope you found this edition to be informative and helpful.

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