



## IS IT A HEART ATTACK?

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## Know the Signs — and What to Do

Although some heart attacks are sudden and intense, most start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Pay attention to your body and call 911 if you feel:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and returns. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath** with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

As with men, women's most common heart-attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

Calling 911 is almost always the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services (EMS) staff can begin treatment when they arrive — up to an hour sooner than if someone gets to the hospital by car. EMS staff are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. It is best to call 911 for rapid transport to the emergency room.

*Source: American Heart Association*



## Your Skin

### Here's Help for "Winter Itch"

Cold weather, with its low relative humidity, wreaks havoc on our skin, making it dry and flaky. Indoor heating further depletes the skin of moisture. To help replenish the water content of your skin, moisturize daily. Apply moisturizer directly to your wet skin after bathing so it can help trap surface moisture.

Cleanse your skin, but don't overdo it. Too much cleansing removes the skin's natural moisturizers. Limit the use of hot water and soap. If you have "winter itch," take short lukewarm showers or baths with a non-irritating, non-detergent-based cleanser. Gently pat skin dry. If you have persistent dry skin, scaling, itching or rashes, see your dermatologist.

*Source: Columbia University Medical Center*

## Living with Chronic Pain?

### Talk with Your Doctor

Everyone reacts to pain differently. Many older people, especially, have been told not to talk about their aches and pains. Some people feel they should be brave and not complain when they hurt. Other people are quick to report pain and ask for help.

Worrying about pain is a common problem. This worry can make you afraid to stay active, and it can separate you from your friends and family. Working with your doctor, you can find ways to continue to take part in physical and social activities despite being in pain.

Some people put off going to the doctor because they think pain is just part of aging and nothing can help. This is not true! It is important to see a doctor if you have a new pain. Finding a way to manage your pain is often easier if it is addressed early.

*Source: National Institute on Aging*



## Heart Disease and Oral Health

### What's the Connection?

Recent research has suggested a link between poor oral health and heart disease. Some of the findings include:

- Poor oral health may be a predictor of future heart disease.
- Oral infections may produce inflammation that can be associated with heart disease.
- Individuals with chronic gum disease may be at greater risk of developing heart disease or having a stroke.
- The more teeth a person has lost, the more likely they are to have gum disease and also carotid artery plaques (indicators of heart disease).

Additional research needs to be conducted on the relationship between oral health and heart disease. However, it is important to note that people with good oral health generally have fewer chronic diseases, including heart disease.

If you already have heart disease, it is important to maintain good oral-hygiene habits. Follow all instructions given to you by your dentist and your physician. This is especially important because you may need a prescription for an antibiotic before a dental appointment.

*Source: Maryland Department of Health, Office of Oral Health*





## Rx Gourmet

Your prescription for healthy eating  
*Heart Healthy, Diabetes Friendly — and Delicious!*

Kids love this yummy fruit dip. It is sweet and nutty without a lot of added sugar or calories and makes plain fruit seem like dessert. And what could be easier than stirring together three or four ingredients? Let children help by combining all the ingredients themselves.

Simply cut fresh seasonal fruit into chunks. (Try apples and pears this time of year.) Then let children carefully place them on wooden skewers to make fruit kebabs. Buy wooden skewers that are not too sharp and make sure children are old enough to do this safely. Then let the really fun part begin: Start dipping!

### Fruit Dip

*Serves 4*

1 - 5.3 ounce container fat-free vanilla Greek yogurt (we used Dannon Light & Fit)

1 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon all natural peanut butter\*

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon (optional)

Mix all ingredients together and serve with fresh fruit.

\*If peanut allergies are an issue, this will work fine with almond or cashew butter.



#### Per serving (1/4 recipe using peanut butter):

60 Calories; 2g Fat (28.6% calories from fat); trace Saturated Fat; 4g Protein; 8g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 3mg Cholesterol; 32mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain (Starch); 0 Lean Meat; 1/2 Fat; 1/2 Other Carbohydrates.

#### Per serving (1/4 recipe using almond butter):

61 Calories; 2g Fat (31.8% calories from fat); trace Saturated Fat; 4g Protein; 8g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 3mg Cholesterol; 13mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain (Starch); 0 Lean Meat; 1/2 Fat; 1/2 Other Carbohydrates.

*Recipe is low fat, low calorie, diabetic friendly and can be gluten free if GF ingredients are used.*

*Recipe courtesy of LowFatLifestyle.com. Visit them on the web and get more free recipes and healthy-cooking tips at LowFatLifestyle.com.*



## Winter Colds and Coughs

When Is It Time to See Your Doctor?

Most winter colds and coughs are viral and will go away on their own with home care. But you'll want to see your doctor if you aren't getting any better over time or if your symptoms worsen. Mucus buildup from a viral infection can lead to a bacterial infection.

With children, be alert for high fevers and for abnormal behavior such as unusual drowsiness, refusal to eat, crying a lot, holding the ears or stomach, and wheezing. Signs of trouble for a child or adult can include a cough that disrupts sleep, a fever that won't go down, increased shortness of breath, facial pain caused by a sinus infection, worsening of symptoms, chest pain or a difference in the mucus you're producing.

Cold and flu complications may include bacterial infections, such as bronchitis, sinusitis, ear infections and pneumonia, that could require antibiotics. Note: While antibiotics are effective against bacterial infections, they don't help against viral infections such as a cold or flu.

*Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
Department of Consumer Health Information*

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## **Senior Health**

**Filling a New Prescription? Be Sure to Ask These Questions**

When you fill a new prescription at your pharmacy, asking the pharmacist these questions will help ensure that you get the full benefit from your medication and that you are taking it safely.

- Do you have a patient profile form for me to fill out? (This is done when you are new to a pharmacy and should be updated as needed.) Does it include space for my over-the-counter drugs and my dietary supplements?
- Can you provide written information about my medicine? Ask the pharmacist if it's available in large print or in a language other than English if you need it.
- What is the most important thing I should know about this medicine? Ask

the pharmacist any questions that may not have been answered by your doctor.

- What side effects might I experience, if any? What should I do if I notice side effects?
- Can I get a refill? If so, when?
- How and where should I store this medicine?
- What should I do if I forget to take a dose?
- Are there any interactions with other medications, OTC products or food of which I should be aware?

*Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration*

### **DID YOU KNOW?**



## **Identifying Food-Medication Interactions**

When you start taking a new medication, it's wise to ask your doctor or pharmacist about potential food interactions with the drug. Certain foods or drinks may affect the action of a medication, such as when a particular food acts to enhance or inhibit the metabolism of a drug in the body. Some foods should be avoided with certain medications, while others may just need to be consumed a few hours before or after taking a medication. Some drugs may increase, decrease or prevent nutrient absorption in the gut. While some of these effects are minor enough not to be a problem, others can lead to your body not receiving full benefit from either the medication or the food. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about whether dietary changes are needed.

*Source: Colorado State University*