



A guide to **living a** *heart-healthy* **lifestyle**

Intentionally designed to keep your heart beating for those you love.





Here for *heart-healthy* living.

There's no greater feeling than adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle. It's about staying active, wholesome eating, remaining centered, and switching up habits to reduce your chances of heart disease. At Virtua, we're here to get you there.

From mouth-watering recipes to workout ideas – our goal is to deliver tips and tricks you can incorporate into your everyday life.

Let's dig in!

A stylized graphic of a heart and its major blood vessels. The heart is depicted in shades of red and pink, with blue and purple vessels branching out. The background is a solid orange color. The text 'Heart Health 101' is overlaid on the left side of the graphic.

Heart Health 101

If we did a power ranking of your most vital organs, the heart would be at the top of the list. Think of your heart as the body's engine room. It pumps blood to every part of your body, providing the oxygen and nutrients it needs to function properly.

Sadly, heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. In fact, every 36 seconds, someone dies from cardiovascular disease. That's why we put together this quick overview of heart disease and the importance of living a heart-healthy lifestyle.

What is heart disease?

Heart disease is the umbrella term for an assortment of heart conditions. Heart disease can include coronary artery disease, cardiac arrest, irregular heartbeats, congestive heart failure, heart defects, heart valve disease, and more.

Is heart disease preventable?

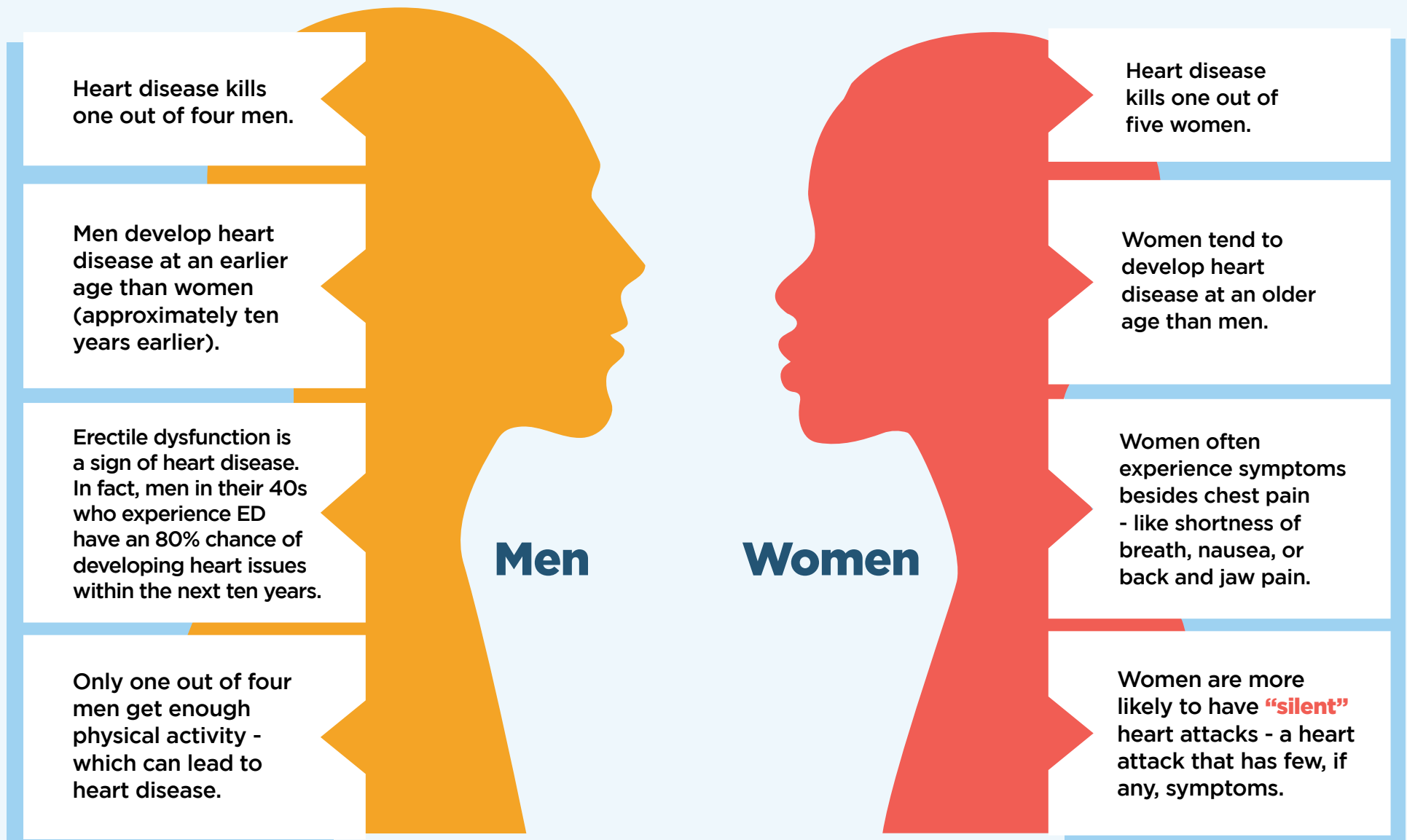
It's estimated that up to 90% of heart disease is preventable through healthy eating, regular exercise, and not smoking.

How to manage heart disease?

There are a number of treatments available to slow and improve heart disease symptoms. From cardiac bypass and angioplasty to adopting heart-healthy lifestyle changes, there are options to make this disease more manageable.

Breaking down the difference between heart disease for men and women.

Heart disease can affect anyone at any phase in life. And while there are some similarities when it comes to signs and symptoms, check out these interesting differences between men and women.





Heart disease symptoms and signs.

Heart disease can be a little tricky to nail down. Because let's be honest, we've all felt some tightness and stinging in our chest from time to time. But if you've been experiencing any of these symptoms and feel extremely unwell, call 911 immediately.

- ▶ Chest pain or tightness
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Pain or numbness in one or both arms or legs
- ▶ Neck, jaw, or throat pain
- ▶ Pain in the upper back or abdomen
- ▶ Sweating
- ▶ Indigestion
- ▶ Nausea or vomiting
- ▶ Fatigue

Pro tip:

Virtua has seven emergency departments throughout Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester County. Find the closest one near you [here](#).

Understanding the *risk factors* of heart disease.



When it comes to heart disease, certain risk factors are out of your control. So think age, family history, menopause, and even complications during pregnancy. But by simply switching up or modifying lifestyle habits, you can significantly reduce and even prevent heart disease.



Smoking

According to the American Heart Association, 20% of people who develop heart disease smoke cigarettes.



Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is a threat to maintaining a healthy heart. Get it checked regularly to keep it under control.



Cholesterol

Learn about your cholesterol levels and what they mean! Higher cholesterol can increase your chances of developing heart disease.



Weight

Being overweight increases your chances of heart disease, specifically heart attacks or strokes.



Alcohol

There's nothing wrong with sipping wine or enjoying a cocktail every now and then. But drink in moderation to protect your health.

Pro tip:

[Take this heart quiz](#) to see how healthy your habits are! It could identify even more ideas and suggestions to keep your heart beating strong!



Food for thought – *let's get cooking!*

For the record: eating a heart-healthy diet does not mean a lifetime of bland, cardboard-flavored eats. By making simple substitutions and incorporating wholesome ingredients, you can have your cake and eat it too, both literally and figuratively.

Start by opting for a diet that's rich in fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grains, seafood, and beans. Next, consider reducing processed and canned foods that are high in salt. And if you're searching for inspiration, indulge in these heart-healthy recipes that are almost too good to be true!

Maple Orange Salmon with Mango Salsa

This easy-to-make, favorite fan dish is packed with omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, and vitamins.

[> View Recipe](#)

Basil Pesto Pasta with Seared Vegetables

Rich in flavor and nutrients, this dish is a perfect example of hearty and healthy.

[> View Recipe](#)

Pear and Walnut Salad

This high fiber and low sodium salad will have you craving more fun ways to eat fruits and veggies.

[> View Recipe](#)

Homemade Hummus

Creamy and smooth, this healthy alternative to chips and salsa will have you drooling and finishing the whole batch.

[> View Recipe](#)

Chocolate Avocado Chia Pudding

Ditch your typical high-sugar dessert and try this unique twist on classic pudding that's equal parts decadent and sweet.

[> View Recipe](#)

Get moving. Be mindful.



Staying active, routinely exercising, and keeping stress levels in check can positively impact your heart health. Exercising for just 30 minutes a day can lower blood pressure, strengthen heart muscles, reduce inflammation, and improve your heart's ability to deliver oxygen to the body.

There's also a significant connection between heart health and stress. Chronic stress can increase blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and promote the buildup of plaque deposits in your arteries - ultimately increasing your risk of heart attack or stroke.

That's why we put together these resources to help you stay active and centered.

The 3 Best Exercises for Heart Health

From yoga to simply taking a walk around the neighborhood - these three simple exercises could make all the difference in the world.

[> Read More](#)

10 Quick Ways to De-Stress

When stress strikes, try one of these techniques for a quick cool-down.

[> Read More](#)

Pump Up the (Heart) Beat with These 25 Workout Songs

We put together this blood-pumping, heart-thumping, pulse-pounding playlist to help get things moving! Enjoy.

[> Read More](#)

Heart-Healthy Checklist



Getting started with a heart-healthy lifestyle could seem overwhelming. But we promise it's not as bad as you think! Use this checklist to keep track of your heart habits. It's important to know when and what to do when it comes to staying healthy and having a little bit of fun.

Everyday

- Exercise for 30 minutes
- Sleep for at least 8 hours
- Eat a healthy amount of fruits and vegetables
- Drink green tea instead of coffee
- Compliment someone

Every Week

- Eat two servings of fatty fish
- Spend time with those you love
- Watch a new movie that lifts your heart
- Lift weights for your workout

Every 6 months

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get blood sugar and cholesterol checked
- Take a few personal days for you
- Weekend getaway

Every Year

- Go on vacation
- Schedule a physical with doctor
- Get a massage to distress
- Do something you've never tried before

We are South Jersey's heart headquarters.

At Virtua, we built South Jersey's leading heart program with the goal of providing comprehensive care to our community. We can arrange an appointment for you with a cardiologist within 48 hours if needed. Our team of over 100 cardiac experts can help with issues both big and small. That's here for good.

To connect with our team, scan the QR code below or call us at 888-363-0696. We can help evaluate your heart health and outline a personalized plan to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease.

For more information,
scan the QR code



Virtua
Health