

# Exercise, fruits and veggies help keep heart healthy

Robert Preidt, HealthDay; *5:34 p.m. EDT March 20, 2014*

Here's the bad news: Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and 49 percent of adults have at least one risk factor for the disease. But the good news is that there are a number of things you can do to keep your heart healthy.

Exercise is a good place to start, said Dr. Judith Mackall, a cardiologist at University Hospitals Case Medical Center, in Cleveland.

Thirty minutes of exercise a day can provide major benefits for your heart, Mackall said in a medical center news release. If you can't do a single 30-minute workout, divide your exercise into three 10-minute sessions a day. Research shows that this amount of exercise can improve cholesterol numbers and reduce weight and blood pressure within 10 weeks.

Healthy eating is also important, and you should consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day as part of a balanced diet, Mackall said. This will reduce your risk of heart disease by helping manage blood pressure and decreasing inflammation.

If you're a smoker, it's time to quit, Mackall said.

"If you smoke, you will knock off seven years of your life," she said. "And if you have cardiovascular disease and you smoke, you'll die 15 years sooner than you would otherwise."

On the Web To learn more go to:

<http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/issue/Feb2012/Feature1>, the U.S. National Institutes of Health outlines what you can do to reduce heart risks.