

## The Value of Prevention

When it comes to health and health care in America, you may be surprised to learn that rising health care costs are the leading driver of our national debt – primarily due to treating the chronic disease epidemic.

Among the most preventable conditions with the greatest impact on health care spending:

- >> **Obesity** is the No. 1 risk for multiple health problems.
- >> **Smoking** is the No. 1 cause of preventable disease.
- >> **Stress** is the No. 1 workplace health disability.

The leading chronic diseases are heart attack, stroke, cancer, diabetes, COPD, musculoskeletal disorders and mental illness. About 80% of these diseases can be prevented or delayed when we use available clinical care methods, foster health education and make individual health changes.



You can learn more about prevention efforts at [fightchronicdisease.org](http://fightchronicdisease.org).

As individuals, we can actively protect our health and reduce premature disabilities. For example:

- >> For tobacco users, quitting is the best thing you can do for your health.
- >> For obesity, weight loss can provide multiple benefits.
- >> For guidance, work with your health care provider.



## Antioxidants Revealed

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Every time you hear about a new superfood, you'll likely learn that it's high in **antioxidants**. This term is used to promote acai berries, pomegranate, green tea and other foods. Is it hope or hype? Let's take a closer look.

**Antioxidants 101:** Antioxidants are vitamins, minerals, flavonoids and other substances in plant and animal foods. They help protect cells from damage by free radicals, created via pollution, cigarette smoke, alcohol and more. When free radicals outnumber antioxidants in the body, it leads to a condition called *oxidative stress*, causing cell damage that can lead to cancer, heart disease and vision problems and contribute to aging.

**Antioxidant-rich foods may contain different types of antioxidants with different health benefits. The bottom line?** Enjoy a variety of vegetables, fruit, nuts, beans, fish, herbs, spices – even coffee and tea – to get a wide range of antioxidants.

**And it's better to get antioxidants from food than from supplements.** The combination of antioxidants, minerals, fiber and other substances found naturally in foods can help prevent chronic disease, but it's unlikely high doses of antioxidant supplements have the same effect.

### QuikQuiz™:

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

## The Lowdown on Added Sugar

How much do you know about sugar and your intake?

Test your knowledge:

1. Which foods contain added sugar (choose all that apply):

- ☐ a. Honey, maple syrup and molasses
- ☐ b. Candy, ice cream and soda
- ☐ c. Fruit and vegetables
- ☐ d. Plain milk and plain yogurt

2. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), you should have no more than \_\_\_\_ teaspoons of added sugar per day.

- ☐ a. 3 for women and 4 for men
- ☐ b. 6 for women and 9 for men
- ☐ c. 12 for women and 15 for men
- ☐ d. 20 for women and 25 for men

3. Added sugar is a required nutrient in the diet.

- ☐ True ☐ False

4. People who get greater than or equal to 10% but less than 25% of total calories from added sugar have a \_\_\_\_ higher risk of death from heart disease or stroke when compared to those who consume less than 10%.

- ☐ a. 5%
- ☐ b. 10%
- ☐ c. 20%
- ☐ d. 30%

Answers on back. >>





February is  
American Heart Month.

## Silent Heart Attacks



**Chest pain, shortness of breath and cold sweats are typical heart attack signs.** But many Americans have heart attacks without symptoms – and when they do, they are 3 times as likely to die from heart disease. Here's why:

**Symptoms of a silent heart attack can be so mild they're barely noticed.** They're often mistaken for indigestion, nausea, muscle pain or influenza. **Most silent heart attacks are discovered accidentally,** with the damage showing up on an EKG or MRI given during a regular exam or before surgery.

**When silent heart attacks go undiagnosed,** people don't get the treatment needed to prevent another heart attack. Although silent heart attacks are more common among men, women are more likely to die from them.

**Do you have the potential to suffer a silent heart attack?** Check with your health care provider if you have these risks for heart attack:

- Smoking or chewing tobacco
- Prior heart attack
- Age
- Family history of heart disease
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Lack of regular exercise

Do your best  
to boost your  
health and  
control heart  
disease risk  
factors.

## QuikQuiz™: The Lowdown on Added Sugar

**ANSWERS** *Continued from front. >>*

- 1. b** – Added sugars include white and brown sugar, added sweeteners (honey, syrups, etc.) and any foods made with these items. The sugar in milk, vegetables and fruit is naturally occurring; it is not added.
- 2. b** – The AHA recommends no more than 6 teaspoons of **added sugar** for women, and 9 for men. How much added sugar do most Americans get? It's around 22 teaspoons – that's too much. Excess sugar is linked with an increased risk of heart disease.
- 3. False** – There's no nutritional need or benefit that comes from eating added sugar. Its only value is pleasure from its sweet taste.
- 4. d** – For those who consume 25% or more of calories from added sugar, the risk of death from heart disease or stroke is nearly tripled.

## Functional Fitness

**While regular exercise helps protect your health,** it's also important to strengthen your mobility through **functional fitness** movements. These exercises work various muscles simultaneously to improve core strength and balance, and reduce injury risk as you age.

**Try these:**

### 1. Squat to chair:

This exercise supports basic functions (e.g., sitting, getting up from a chair, picking up items from the floor) by building core and entire lower body strength.



**To start:** Standing with feet shoulder-width apart and chest upright, bend your knees, push hips back and lower yourself to the chair. Once seated or just touching the chair, lean forward slightly and push through feet to rise back to starting position. Aim for 5 to 10 repetitions.

### 2. Bicep curls:

The ability to lift things, whether groceries or a grandchild, is indispensable – and becomes more difficult with age. By lifting weights, you'll strengthen and keep flexible muscles needed to lift, stretch, reach and pull.



**To start:** Seated on an exercise ball or a chair, hold 1- or 2-pound weights in palms at your side, facing inward. Slowly bend 1 elbow, lift the weight toward your chest and rotate so your palm faces your shoulder. Pause. Then slowly lower your arm and rotate back to starting position. Repeat with other arm; aim for 8 to 12 repetitions.

Training your muscles to work together efficiently can help keep you safe and mobile for years to come.

**Note:** Get your health care provider's okay first.

“The **world** is round so that **friendship** may encircle it. — *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*”



## Spread the love on February 14, National Donor Day.

Every 10 minutes, a person is added to the national organ transplant waiting list, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, and just 1 donor could save 8 lives. If you're not registered as an organ donor, consider the difference you could make. Learn more at [organdonor.gov](http://organdonor.gov).



Smart Moves toolkit is at [www.personalbest.com/extras/18V2tools](http://www.personalbest.com/extras/18V2tools).

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