

NATIONAL CHOLESTERAL EDUCATION MONTH

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States — but many of the risk factors are ones you can see, track and manage. Fall is a natural time to check in: knowing a handful of key numbers helps you and your doctor catch small issues before they grow. Here are the numbers worth knowing.

- 1. Blood pressure.** A healthy target is below 120/80 mmHg. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so a quick check is the only way to know where you stand.
- 2. Cholesterol.** A simple blood test shows your LDL (“bad”), HDL (“good”) and total cholesterol. Most adults should have it checked at least every four to six years — more often with risk factors.
- 3. Blood sugar.** Knowing your A1C or fasting glucose can catch prediabetes early, when small changes make the biggest difference.
- 4. Body weight.** Reaching or keeping a healthy weight eases strain on your heart. Even a modest loss of 5–10% brings real benefits.
- 5. Activity minutes.** Aim for about 150 minutes of moderate activity a week. It’s one of the most powerful things you can do for your heart.

Source: American Heart Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health.

HEART-SMART HABITS

Small daily choices add up to a stronger heart. A few easy places to start:

Season with herbs. Swap salt for herbs, citrus and spices to cut sodium without losing flavor.

Take the stairs. Short bursts of movement through the day keep your heart working.

Know your history. Ask relatives about heart conditions — family history helps guide your care.

Wind down well. Managing stress and getting good sleep both protect your heart.

You can’t change your age or genes — but the daily habits you build have a powerful say in your heart health.

Source: American Heart Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR FALL CHECK-UP

With benefits season and back-to-routine energy, fall is a great time to see your primary care provider. A little preparation helps you get the most from the visit:

- **Ask for your numbers.** Request your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar results — and what they mean for you.
- **Review screenings.** Confirm which screenings you're due for based on your age and history.
- **Update vaccines.** Fall is the time to ask about flu and other recommended vaccines.

Bring a short list of questions. A prepared visit is a more productive one.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (MyHealthfinder).

FUEL YOUR HEART: SEPTEMBER IS FRUITS & VEGGIES MONTH

What's on your plate is one of the biggest levers for heart health — and September, National Fruits & Veggies Month, is the perfect nudge. Produce is rich in fiber and potassium that support healthy blood pressure and cholesterol.

- Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables at most meals.
- Lean on fall produce — apples, pears, squash, sweet potatoes and leafy greens.
- Choose whole grains and swap in beans or fish a few times a week.

Frozen and canned (no-salt-added) count too — an easy, budget-friendly way to eat the rainbow.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (MyPlate); Produce for Better Health Foundation (Have A Plant).

IN THE KITCHEN

HARVEST GRAIN & ROASTED VEGGIE BOWL

A hearty, heart-healthy bowl full of fall produce, fiber and plant protein. Great warm for dinner or packed cold for lunch. Makes 4 servings.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup quinoa or farro, cooked
- 1 sweet potato, diced
- 2 cups Brussels sprouts, halved
- 1 (15-oz) can chickpeas, drained
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 2 Tbsp tahini
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp maple syrup; salt & pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Toss sweet potato, sprouts and chickpeas with olive oil, salt and pepper.
2. Roast 25–30 minutes, stirring once, until golden.
3. Whisk tahini, lemon juice, maple syrup and 2–3 Tbsp water into a dressing.
4. Divide grains and spinach into bowls; top with roasted veggies and drizzle with dressing.

Per serving (approx.): 410 cal · 14 g protein · 55 g carbs · 11 g fiber · 16 g fat · 320 mg sodium. Nutrition information is approximate.

Source: Wellbeing for Your WORLD kitchen.