

Dr. Tara Dall's Top 10 list to Optimal Heart Health

1. Know your numbers. Optimal Blood pressure <120/80, consider investing in a home blood pressure meter. Optimal Total cholesterol <200, LDL C <100 (bad cholesterol), HDL C >50 (Good cholesterol), Triglycerides <150. Optimal LDL particle concentration <1000. If these numbers are above optimal do something about it, a change in diet, increased exercise or weight loss will help.

2. If you smoke, quit.

3. Everything in moderation; Alcohol not more than 1 serving/day for women or 2 servings/day for men. Higher intake will increase heart disease risk.

4. Move as much as possible. Get a pedometer: goal 10,000 steps/day, more needed if weight loss desired. If you have less than 5,000/day you are officially sedentary.

5. Know your family history. Is there anyone with heart disease or stroke before age 55 for men or 65 for women? Is there diabetes in the family? Update your health care provider of your family history at all your preventive care visits. You may be a candidate for further testing if you have family history of premature disease. (hsCRP, lipoprotein (a), Apo B or LDL particle concentration)

6. Eliminate trans fat from your diet. NO TRANS FAT/ PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED OIL (read the ingredient lists). Minimize saturated fat intake <2-3 grams/serving. Add fiber 25-30 grams/day. Minimize high fructose corn syrup and simple sugars. Complex carbohydrates and good fats such as olive oil, canola oil and fatty fish (monounsaturated Omega 3s) are an essential part of our diet. Waukesha Memorial has monthly classes on Heart Healthy Eating call Nurse on Line to schedule.

7. Know the signs and symptoms of heart disease in women and men (they are different). Get medical help as soon as possible, if you think you may be having a heart attack, call 911. Time is of the essence. Don't tough it out.

8. Keep a list of all your medications. This includes over the counter diet supplements, the doses, and how often you take them. Keep this with you and bring to all your medical appointments.

9. Get enough sleep. People who sleep less than 6 hours per night have higher risk for heart disease than those who get 7-8 hours per night.

10. Find ways to reduce stress in your life. (Exercise, try not to hold in anger, spend time with people who support you, try to not multitask for one full day, smile as much as possible)