

## Reducing the risk of heart disease

Preventing heart disease (Cardiovascular disease) does not necessarily mean you have to stop doing or stop having all the good things in life. Most often a moderation approach to life is all that is required to keep us in good health. However, there are certain risk factors which increase our chance of developing heart disease.

These could be placed under two headings: Modifiable risks & Non-preventable risks.

Modifiable Risks include smoking, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, high cholesterol, diabetes or being overweight.

Non-preventable risks include age, gender and family history. These are risk factors we can not change.

So what are your risk factors and what can you do about them?

1. Keep a check on your blood pressure.
2. Exercise regularly
3. Stop SMOKING
4. Eat a low-fat diet
5. Watch your weight

Here are some ideas on how to reduce these risks:

### Eat a low fat diet & watch your weight

A low fat diet is a way to help keep our blood cholesterol and our weight down. People who are overweight tend to have higher blood pressure and higher cholesterol.

For a healthy balanced diet we should use low fat dairy products instead of full cream milk, cheese and cream. We should choose lean meat or remove the fat. Eat fresh or tinned fish two or three times a week. Steam or grill food rather than fry or bake in oil. If you are using fats or oils, try and use the polyunsaturated or olive oils. Limit the amount of Fatty foods such as cakes, biscuits and chocolate. Eat whole grain cereals instead of the high-fat baked goods such as donuts, Danish pastry and croissants. Eat lots of fruit, vegetables including salads. The National Heart Foundation has now made it easy for us by putting their tick of approval on the packaging. For more information on diet, exercise and heart disease you can refer to the Heart Foundation web site at [www.heartfoundation.com.au](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au) or phone Heartline on 1300 36 27 87.

### Stop smoking

Complete cessation and avoidance of passive smoking is extremely important not only from the point of heart disease but for many other diseases also. Most smokers just simply stop (cold turkey) but other people find it useful to use techniques such as patches, group therapy and counselling services to assist in their success. For further assistance and advice on giving up smoking you can refer to the heart foundation web site or call the Quitline on 131 848.

