TIPS FOR TAKING YOUR HEALTH TO HEART

Have you thought about your heart health lately? It’s something we all should do—particularly considering the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s statistics\(^1\) showing that heart disease causes one in four deaths and is the leading cause of death for both men and women. A staggering 735,000 Americans have a heart attack every year. In fact, in Prince George’s County, there are more incidents of heart disease than in any other area in Maryland—and it is the leading cause of death\(^2\).

Cecily Ludka, RN, at Doctors Community Hospital’s Cardiac Rehabilitation Department discusses ways for you to take your health to heart.

**Q: How can I keep my heart healthy?**

**A:** Diet plays a key role. Research shows that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can reduce new major cardiac events by 73 percent\(^3\). So, eat fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish and nuts. Also, avoid excess sodium and saturated fats.

It’s not just what you eat that makes a difference. Smoking can lead to coronary heart disease (CHD), high blood pressure and many other significant heart risks\(^4\). Also, if you have high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease, it’s important to manage these conditions and consult with your healthcare provider.

**Q: What about exercise?**

**A:** Sedentary or non-active lifestyles can double your risk of heart disease\(^5\). That’s almost as much damage to the heart as smoking! The good news is that just 30 minutes of exercise most days does a lot to improve your cardiac health. It doesn’t have to be intense activity—even walking helps.

It’s also important to manage your weight to help prevent heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and other serious health issues.

**Q: When should I see a doctor?**

**A:** Regular heart health screenings should start around age 20\(^6\), but the frequency and types of screenings will depend on your specific level of risk. Conditions such as previous cardiac events or high-risk factors like smoking, high blood pressure or obesity make it even more important to consult with your doctor.
**Q: How does cardiac rehabilitation help?**
A. If you’ve had a cardiac event, a cardiac rehabilitation program can help you get the exercise and support you need to restore your health in a safe and monitored environment. We help people recover from open-heart surgery, congestive heart failure or other heart-related conditions.

After a cardiac event, many people feel afraid to exercise—but it’s crucial for overall heart health. We help people build strength and stamina with exercise training that is appropriate for their conditions. Our program offers medical supervision, so skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals are available at all times. We also provide education on how to reduce future risks of cardiac events.

**Q: What is the hospital’s Cardiac Rehabilitation Scholarship Program?**
A. Doctors Community Hospital provides a scholarship program that benefits high-risk cardiac rehabilitation patients who are uninsured/underinsured as well as need post-operative services, health education and follow-up care. You can help support this life-saving program by making a tax-deductible donation. Contact our Doctors Community Hospital Foundation at 301-552-8670 or visit DCH-Foundation.org.

**Doctors Community Hospital’s Cardiac Rehabilitation Program**
We take your health to heart. Certified by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation, our highly trained and compassionate therapists can help get your heart healthy again.

Also, join us at our WomenHeart Support Group held at Doctors Community Hospital from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on January 26, March 22, May 24, September 20 and November 15.

*For more information, visit us at DCHrehab.org or call us at 301-DCH-4YOU (301-324-4968).*

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**About Doctors Community Hospital**
Doctors Community Hospital is a premier medical and surgical hospital located in Lanham, Maryland. With a mission of being dedicated to passionately caring for the health of patients and the community, the hospital has provided high-quality as well as comprehensive health care to residents of Prince George’s County and the region for 40 years.

A non-profit and 163 bed facility, Doctors Community Hospital has a wide range of specialty programs and services.

- Bariatric and Weight Loss Center
- Cardiology Services and Outpatient Vascular Studies
- Center for Comprehensive Breast Care
- Center for Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine
- Comprehensive Orthopedic Program
- Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services
- Doctors Regional Cancer Center
- Emergency Services
- Infusion Center
- Joslin Diabetes Center
- Metropolitan Medical Specialists
- Sleep Center
- Vascular Health Program

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