



## FEATURE ARTICLE FROM **Always Best Care**

# Heart Healthy Habits for Seniors

Did you know that [heart disease is the leading cause of death](#) in the United States, ranking above cancer, stroke, diabetes, and other causes?

In honor of February being American Heart Month, we're taking a closer look at some of the ways seniors can be more proactive with their heart health. While some heart disease risks do increase with age, there are ways that seniors can help protect their heart and overall well-being.

### **1. Stay Active**

Seniors should aim to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days per week. This could include walking, running, biking, swimming, Pilates, yoga, weight machines, or other activities. Many senior centers offer fitness classes or resources tailored to the needs and abilities of older adults.

### **2. Eat a Well-Balanced Diet**

A healthy diet should include plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Seniors should try to limit the amount of sodium, saturated fats, and processed foods they eat. This can be difficult if they have limited income, memory problems, or trouble navigating in the kitchen to prepare meals. An in-home care provider can support seniors in creating grocery lists, planning and [preparing meals](#), and ensuring foods in their cabinets or refrigerator have not spoiled.

### **3. Get Screened**

Monitoring blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes is also an essential part of good heart health. Having an [annual physical](#) can help detect problems early and ensure conditions are well-managed if they do exist. It is important that seniors take any prescription medications as directed and have regular follow-ups to track their health.

### **4. Reduce Stress**

It should come as no surprise that stress puts unnecessary strain on the heart. Practicing meditation, socializing with friends, making time to relax and do favorite activities, and staying active can all help to keep stress in check. Make sure seniors have access to activities that they enjoy and are surrounded by family and friends who can support positive mental health and stress reduction.

### **5. Quit Smoking**

Smoking constricts blood vessels in the heart and also limits the amount of oxygen available. It can also increase risk of respiratory problems, cancer, osteoporosis, and more. Not to mention it elevates the risk for a heart attack or stroke. Quitting smoking can be tough, but it is possible, even for those seniors who have smoked for years. The benefits of quitting can be felt almost immediately and help to decrease risk of heart problems. It's not too late.

Taking steps to incorporate healthier habits can protect senior's heart health. These are the same types of activities that boost overall well-being too and can help seniors feel stronger and more energized. They don't have to make all of these changes at once either – start off slowly by making small changes and then building to larger ones. Every little bit helps.

Working with an in-home caregiver can allow seniors to receive the support they need to more safely implement these changes. A caregiver can help them with all aspects of meal planning and preparation as well as provide companionship while eating. They can assist them with going on walks or attending fitness classes. In addition, a caregiver can provide medication reminders so that seniors don't forget to take their prescriptions.

Always Best Care can set your senior up with an in-home caregiver that meets their needs and boosts their quality of life as they age in place. Give yourself and your loved one peace of mind by calling Always Best Care today at (855) 470-2273 to schedule a free consultation.