

# ♥ HEART HEALTH

## Living Right: Tips For The Ticker

(NAPSA)—A growing number of Americans are taking heart from knowing they can take steps to promote their own heart health.

More than 61 million Americans have some form of cardiovascular disease—and every 33 seconds someone dies from high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure or another related condition. Cardiovascular disease cost the nation an estimated \$329.2 billion in 2002 including health care costs and lost productivity.

Individuals who are overweight, physically inactive, have a diet high in cholesterol and salt, smoke, or have diabetes are at increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

According to the Chronic Disease Directors (CDD), a Washington, DC-based public health association, it's important to have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly and to maintain an active lifestyle. If you have been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease, work with your physician to develop a plan that includes diet, exercise and medication. There are many new medications currently available to help with all types of cardiovascular diseases.

Adopting healthy lifestyle habits is an effective first step in both preventing and controlling all forms of cardiovascular disease. Suggested habits include:

- Following a healthy eating pattern;



**Increasing physical activity can help improve your overall heart health.**

- Reducing salt and sodium in your diet;
- Maintaining a healthy weight;
- Being physically active;
- Limiting alcohol intake; and
- Quitting smoking.

If lifestyle changes alone are not effective in controlling your disease, it may be necessary to add medications. If your physician does prescribe drugs, make sure to fill your prescription, take the medicines as directed and get follow-up care.

CDD is composed of the chief public health executive of each U.S. state and territory. CDD works to educate the public about risks and choices and strives to create access to preventative health services. To learn more, visit [www.ChronicDisease.org](http://www.ChronicDisease.org).