

HEART HEALTH

Six Steps To A Healthier Heart

(NAPSA)—If an apple a day keeps the doctor away, what does it take to avoid a heart surgeon? Knowing the answer could help you and your family avoid coronary heart disease—America’s number-one killer.

Dr. Mehmet C. Oz is Vice Chairman of surgery at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia Medical Center and is Senior Medical Contributor to Discovery Health Channel. He says heart health has become even more of a hot-button issue since former President Bill Clinton’s bypass surgery stirred national conversation about heart disease. Dr. Oz offers these six tips for a healthy heart:

1. **Break a Sweat:** Any amount of physical activity lowers LDL (“bad cholesterol”), raises HDL (“good cholesterol”) and decreases inflammation, all of which strengthen the heart. To obtain opti-



mum health, you should get 20 minutes of cardiovascular exercise that increases your heart rate 20 percent at least three times a week.

2. **Go Fish (and Nuts):** Both fish and nuts are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which reduce triglyceride levels in the blood and stabilize the heartbeat. To get your



omega-3 fatty acids (“good fats”), you should eat three portions of fish per week and an ounce of nuts a day.

3. **Get Your zzzs:** Fewer than seven hours of sleep a night increases your arterial aging and risk of heart attack. Try to get at least seven hours of solid, non-interrupted sleep nightly.

4. **No Smoking:** You can’t control how genetics affects your heart health, but you can control your lifestyle decisions. Smoking adds to your risk for a heart attack as well as your chance of developing a host of other health-related problems.

5. **“De”-stress:** According to Discovery Health Channel, stress is the greatest environmental cause of heart disease. Actively working to reduce your stress through relaxation and meditation will keep your heart healthier.

6. **Know Your Numbers:** The better the handle you have on important levels in your body, the better you’ll be able to measure your risk, predict heart problems and flag danger. Consider these tests and numbers a vital part of your heart health: Blood Cholesterol Test, Blood Pressure Test and Physical Tests (maximum heart rate and recovery time). To determine your numbers, consult your health care provider.

For more information, visit www.discovery.com/health.