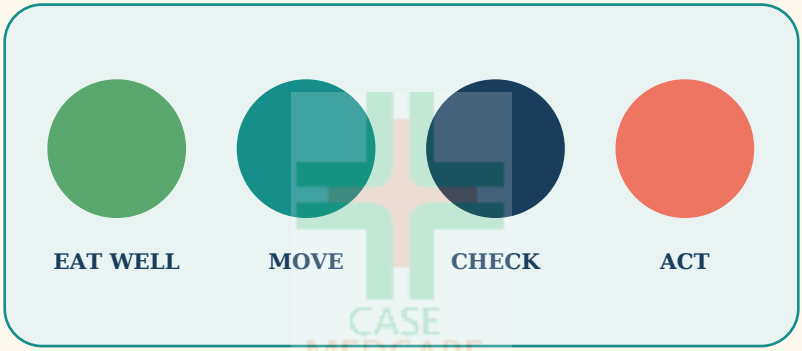
100 WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF HEART DISEASE



A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR

prevention, early action and lasting habits

KAMUKAMA KABIIKIRE

Author and compiler

PREFACE

Heart disease can develop quietly over many years. This book brings together one hundred practical ways to reduce risk through avoiding tobacco, choosing nourishing foods, moving regularly, managing weight and checking important health measures.

The guidance is written for individuals, families, schools and communities. Each numbered topic combines a key message, an explanation, a relevant example and practical actions. Small changes repeated consistently can become lasting habits.

Risk reduction is not a guarantee. Age, family history, pregnancy, existing illness and other factors influence personal risk. If you live with high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease, follow the individual plan agreed with a qualified health professional. Do not stop prescribed medicines without advice.

Learn the warning signs of heart attack and stroke, and seek urgent medical care if they appear. Use this book to start informed conversations with health workers and to make achievable changes at home and in your community.

May these pages help readers protect the heart through steady action, timely checks and care for one another.

KNOW YOUR RISK - ACT EARLY - CONTINUE

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SECTION A

LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



WAYS 1-10: PROTECT THE HEART AND BLOOD VESSELS

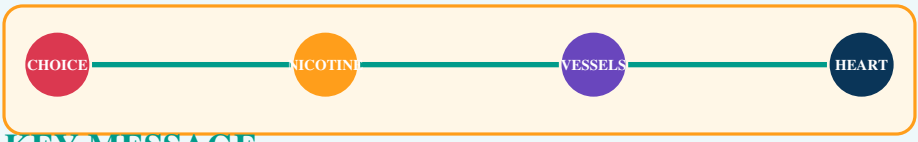
PREVENTION STARTS WITH CLEAN AIR

Tobacco and nicotine can raise heart rate and blood pressure, damage blood vessels and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. This section turns evidence into ten practical actions for individuals, families, schools and workplaces.

AVOID NICOTINE - KEEP AIR CLEAN - GET HELP TO QUIT

1. Never Begin Smoking Cigarettes

SECTION A: LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



KEY MESSAGE

The safest protection is never to start. Even occasional smoking exposes the heart and blood vessels to harmful chemicals.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Nicotine raises heart rate and blood pressure. Carbon monoxide reduces the oxygen carried by blood, while smoke damages artery walls, encourages clotting and speeds the build-up of fatty deposits. Young people can become dependent before they realise how difficult quitting may be.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At a school reunion in Kampala, a student is offered a cigarette to look mature. He refuses, stays with supportive friends and avoids beginning a habit that could follow him into adulthood.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Practise a confident refusal: “No, I do not smoke.”
2. Choose friends and places that support healthy decisions.
3. Do not carry or light cigarettes for another person.
4. Use walking, music, sport or conversation to manage pressure.

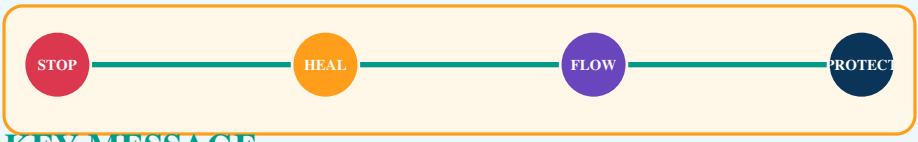
MYTH	One or two cigarettes at social events cannot affect the heart.
FACT	There is no harmless level of tobacco smoke exposure; light smoking can still injure blood vessels.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Practise a confident refusal: “No, I do not smoke.”
- ☐ Choose friends and places that support healthy decisions.
- ☐ Do not carry or light cigarettes for another person.
- ☐ Use walking, music, sport or conversation to manage pressure.

2. Stop Smoking as Soon as Possible

SECTION A: LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



KEY MESSAGE

Quitting at any age benefits the heart, and earlier quitting prevents more accumulated damage.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

After smoking stops, exposure to nicotine, carbon monoxide and many toxic particles falls. The body begins repairing blood vessels and circulation. Heart-attack risk decreases over time, including for people who already have heart disease. Cutting down may be a step, but complete cessation gives the strongest protection.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A taxi driver notices that smoking leaves him breathless on stairs. He sets a quit date, tells his family, removes cigarettes and asks a health worker for support rather than waiting for serious illness.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

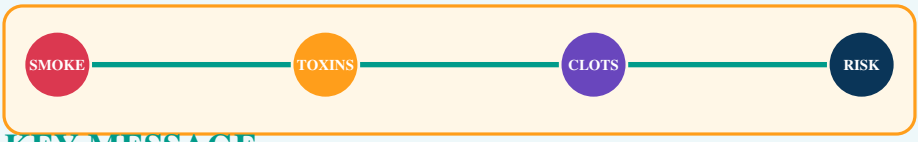
1. Choose a quit date within the next few weeks.
2. Remove cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters from your spaces.
3. Tell trusted people how they can support you.
4. Seek counselling and approved cessation treatment when available.

MYTH	It is too late to benefit after many years of smoking.
FACT	Stopping still reduces cardiovascular risk and protects people around you.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Choose a quit date within the next few weeks.
- ☐ Remove cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters from your spaces.
- ☐ Tell trusted people how they can support you.
- ☐ Seek counselling and approved cessation treatment when available.

3. Avoid Cigars, Pipes and Shisha



KEY MESSAGE

Cigars, pipes and waterpipe tobacco are not safe alternatives to cigarettes.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

All burning tobacco produces toxic smoke. Shisha sessions may last a long time and can involve substantial smoke and carbon-monoxide exposure, including from charcoal. Even without deep inhalation, nicotine and toxins can enter through the mouth and lungs and place stress on the heart and blood vessels.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Friends meet at a café and believe fruit-flavoured shisha is filtered by water. One person chooses a smoke-free drink and explains that cool, sweet-tasting smoke can still carry dangerous chemicals.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Decline invitations to smoke cigars, pipes or shisha.
2. Choose smoke-free cafés and social activities.
3. Do not share mouthpieces or assume water removes toxins.
4. Avoid charcoal smoke and poorly ventilated smoking areas.

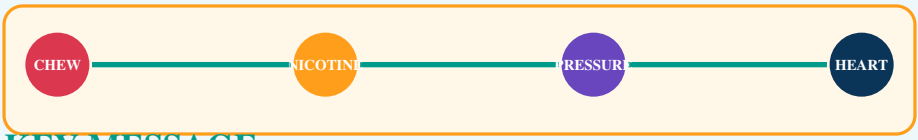
MYTH	Water filters the dangerous chemicals from shisha smoke.
FACT	Water does not remove many harmful gases, particles or addictive nicotine.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Decline invitations to smoke cigars, pipes or shisha.
- ☐ Choose smoke-free cafés and social activities.
- ☐ Do not share mouthpieces or assume water removes toxins.
- ☐ Avoid charcoal smoke and poorly ventilated smoking areas.

4. Avoid Smokeless Tobacco Products

SECTION A: LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



KEY MESSAGE

Chewing tobacco, snuff and similar products avoid smoke but do not avoid nicotine or cardiovascular harm.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Smokeless tobacco can deliver substantial nicotine, raise heart rate and blood pressure and maintain addiction. Products may also contain toxic substances and cause serious mouth disease. Changing from cigarettes to an unsafe oral tobacco product may simply continue dependence instead of ending it.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A market worker is told that snuff is safer because it is not burned. She checks with a health professional, learns that it still contains addictive nicotine and chooses a structured quitting plan.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Do not begin chewing tobacco, snuff or snus.
2. Do not use smokeless tobacco as an unassisted substitute.
3. Ask for evidence-based help to end nicotine dependence.
4. Arrange dental or medical review for persistent mouth changes.

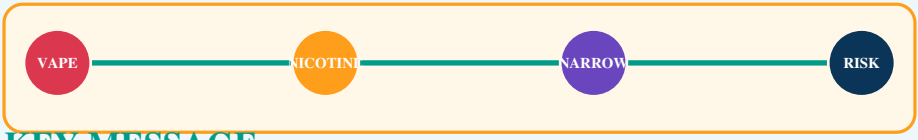
MYTH	Tobacco is safe if it is chewed rather than smoked.
FACT	Smokeless products can sustain addiction and are not harmless to the heart or mouth.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Do not begin chewing tobacco, snuff or snus.
- ☐ Do not use smokeless tobacco as an unassisted substitute.
- ☐ Ask for evidence-based help to end nicotine dependence.
- ☐ Arrange dental or medical review for persistent mouth changes.

5. Stop Vaping and Other Inhaled Nicotine Use

SECTION A: LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



KEY MESSAGE

Vaping is not harmless air. Most e-cigarettes expose users to addictive nicotine and an aerosol containing other substances.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Nicotine can increase heart rate and blood pressure and narrow blood vessels. Aerosols may contain fine particles, flavouring chemicals and metals. Long-term effects continue to be studied, so non-users should not start. People using vaping to quit smoking should obtain professional guidance and avoid using both products.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A young adult starts vaping because the device smells fruity. When he notices frequent cravings, he makes a quit plan, removes the device and asks a trained health worker for behavioural support.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Do not start vaping or using nicotine pouches.
2. Set a date to stop and remove devices and refills.
3. Avoid dual use of cigarettes and e-cigarettes.
4. Seek qualified cessation support for strong cravings.

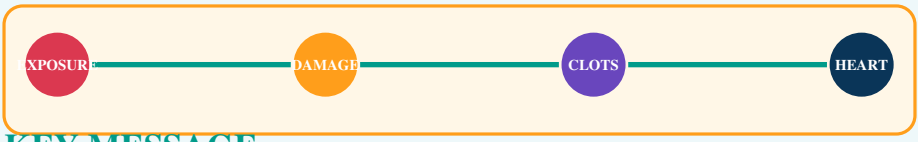
MYTH	Fruit flavour means the aerosol is safe for the heart.
FACT	Flavour does not remove nicotine or other potentially harmful aerosol substances.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Do not start vaping or using nicotine pouches.
- ☐ Set a date to stop and remove devices and refills.
- ☐ Avoid dual use of cigarettes and e-cigarettes.
- ☐ Seek qualified cessation support for strong cravings.

6. Protect Yourself from Second-Hand Smoke

SECTION A: LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



KEY MESSAGE

There is no safe level of second-hand smoke exposure; even brief exposure can affect the heart and blood vessels.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Smoke from burning tobacco and smoke breathed out by a smoker contain harmful chemicals. Exposure can damage blood-vessel lining, make blood more likely to clot and increase the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke in people who do not smoke.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A shop attendant works beside a doorway where customers smoke. The owner creates a smoke-free rule and moves the smoking point well away from entrances, windows and shared seating.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Move away from smoke rather than relying on an open window.
2. Ask respectfully for smoking to happen outside and far away.
3. Choose smoke-free restaurants, taxis and workplaces.
4. Protect children, pregnant women and people with heart disease.

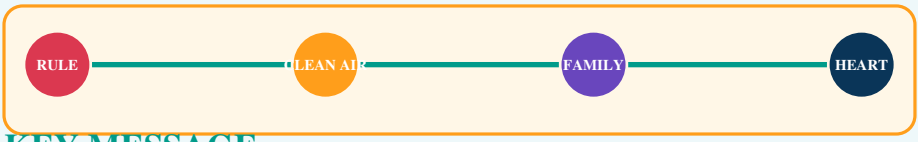
MYTH	A little smoke is harmless if the room has a window.
FACT	Ventilation cannot make indoor second-hand smoke safe.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Move away from smoke rather than relying on an open window.
- ☐ Ask respectfully for smoking to happen outside and far away.
- ☐ Choose smoke-free restaurants, taxis and workplaces.
- ☐ Protect children, pregnant women and people with heart disease.

7. Keep Homes Completely Smoke-Free

SECTION A: LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



KEY MESSAGE

A clear no-smoking rule protects everyone who lives in or visits the home.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Smoke spreads between rooms and can remain in the air and on surfaces. Children, older adults, pregnant women and people with asthma or heart disease are especially vulnerable. Smoking in another room, at a window or only when children are absent does not provide reliable protection.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A family agrees that nobody may smoke inside the house or veranda. Visitors are informed kindly, and the family supports a relative who decides to quit instead of shaming him.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Declare the whole home smoke-free at all times.
2. Remove ashtrays and do not offer cigarettes to visitors.
3. Place a respectful smoke-free reminder near the entrance.
4. Support household members who want to quit.

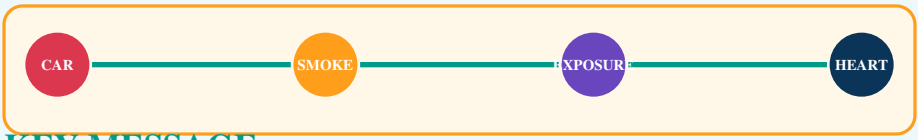
MYTH	Smoking in the kitchen or near a window protects the family.
FACT	Smoke moves through the home; the safest rule is no indoor smoking.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Declare the whole home smoke-free at all times.
- ☐ Remove ashtrays and do not offer cigarettes to visitors.
- ☐ Place a respectful smoke-free reminder near the entrance.
- ☐ Support household members who want to quit.

8. Keep Vehicles Smoke-Free

SECTION A: LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



KEY MESSAGE

A vehicle is a small enclosed space where tobacco smoke can quickly become concentrated.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Opening windows or using air conditioning does not eliminate exposure. Children and passengers cannot easily move away, and smoke residue remains on seats and surfaces. A permanent smoke-free rule protects family members, customers and drivers.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A boda or taxi operator places a no-smoking sign in the vehicle and politely asks passengers not to smoke. He stops the vehicle safely if a reminder is needed.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Make every family and work vehicle smoke-free.
2. Do not allow smoking even when windows are open.
3. Display a clear, polite no-smoking notice.
4. Plan smoke-free rest stops on long journeys.

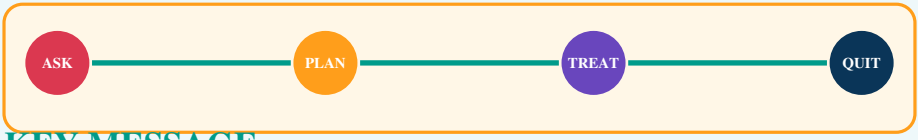
MYTH	Opening the windows removes all harmful smoke.
FACT	Windows reduce some visible smoke but do not eliminate dangerous exposure.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Make every family and work vehicle smoke-free.
- ☐ Do not allow smoking even when windows are open.
- ☐ Display a clear, polite no-smoking notice.
- ☐ Plan smoke-free rest stops on long journeys.

9. Use Professional Support When Quitting Tobacco

SECTION A: LIVE FREE FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



KEY MESSAGE

Quitting is easier and more successful when behavioural support and appropriate treatment are combined.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Nicotine dependence changes brain reward pathways and can cause cravings, irritability, poor concentration and sleep disturbance. These symptoms are real and temporary. A trained health worker can help assess dependence, identify safe treatment options, plan follow-up and manage relapse without judgement.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After several unsuccessful attempts, a teacher speaks to a clinician, identifies morning and staff-room triggers and agrees on counselling, follow-up and an approved treatment plan.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

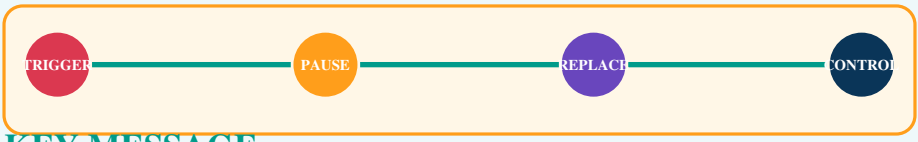
1. Tell a clinician or counsellor that you want to quit.
2. Ask about approved treatment suitable for your health.
3. Arrange follow-up during the first difficult weeks.
4. Treat a lapse as a signal to adjust the plan, not surrender.

MYTH	Needing help means a smoker lacks willpower.
FACT	Nicotine dependence is powerful; professional support is a sensible health decision.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Tell a clinician or counsellor that you want to quit.
- ☐ Ask about approved treatment suitable for your health.
- ☐ Arrange follow-up during the first difficult weeks.
- ☐ Treat a lapse as a signal to adjust the plan, not surrender.

10. Recognise and Manage Smoking Triggers



KEY MESSAGE

Knowing when, where and why cravings occur makes it easier to prepare a healthier response.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Common triggers include stress, alcohol, coffee, after meals, certain friends, boredom and seeing another person smoke. A craving usually rises and passes. Delaying, deep breathing, drinking water, walking and contacting a supportive person can break the automatic link between a trigger and smoking.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A shopkeeper usually smokes after closing. She changes the routine: drinks water, takes a short walk, calls her sister and keeps cigarettes out of reach.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Record triggers and cravings for several days.
2. Plan one specific replacement for each common trigger.
3. Use delay, deep breathing, water and movement.
4. Avoid high-risk places and alcohol during early quitting.

MYTH	A craving will keep growing until a person smokes.
FACT	Cravings usually pass; a prepared response helps a person stay in control.

MY HEART-PROTECTION COMMITMENT

- ☐ Record triggers and cravings for several days.
- ☐ Plan one specific replacement for each common trigger.
- ☐ Use delay, deep breathing, water and movement.
- ☐ Avoid high-risk places and alcohol during early quitting.

CLEAN AIR PROTECTS THE HEART



REAL-LIFE HEART PROTECTION IN ACTION

DO NOT START	Prevent the first cigarette, vape or tobacco product.
QUIT EARLY	Use counselling, support and approved treatment.
CLEAR THE AIR	Keep homes, vehicles, schools and workplaces smoke-free.
MANAGE TRIGGERS	Replace cravings with water, movement, breathing and support.

NO TOBACCO - NO SECOND-HAND SMOKE - MORE HEART HEALTH

SECTION B

BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



WAYS 11-20: CHOOSE FOODS THAT PROTECT THE HEART

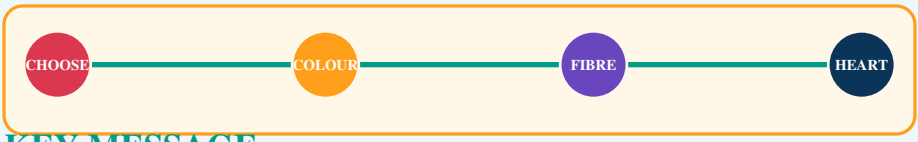
HEART HEALTH IS BUILT MEAL BY MEAL

A healthy eating pattern emphasises vegetables, fruits, pulses, whole grains, nuts, fish and other lean proteins. It uses unsaturated oils carefully and limits highly processed foods, excess salt, added sugar and saturated fat.

MORE PLANTS - SMARTER PROTEIN - LESS PROCESSING

11. Eat a Variety of Vegetables Every Day

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Make vegetables a regular part of meals rather than an occasional decoration.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Vegetables provide fibre, potassium, vitamins and many protective plant compounds. A varied intake supports healthy blood pressure, cholesterol, body weight and blood-sugar control. Different colours supply different nutrients, so rotate leafy greens, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, eggplant, pumpkin and other locally available produce.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A Kampala family adds nakati and carrots to lunch, cabbage to supper and tomatoes to a bean sauce. They buy seasonal produce to control cost.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Fill a large part of the plate with vegetables.
2. Choose several colours across the week.
3. Use steaming, boiling, grilling or light sautéing.
4. Keep salt, butter and heavy sauces modest.

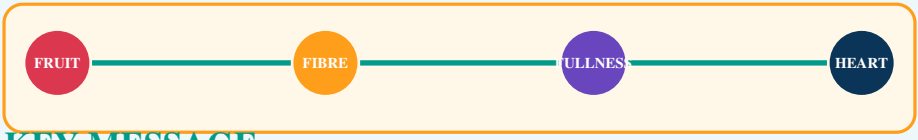
MYTH	Only expensive imported vegetables protect the heart.
FACT	Affordable local and seasonal vegetables can form an excellent heart-healthy pattern.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Fill a large part of the plate with vegetables.
- ☐ Choose several colours across the week.
- ☐ Use steaming, boiling, grilling or light sautéing.
- ☐ Keep salt, butter and heavy sauces modest.

12. Choose Whole Fruits Instead of Sugary Fruit Drinks

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Whole fruit usually gives more fibre and fullness than sweetened fruit drinks.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Whole fruit contains water, fibre, vitamins and minerals in its natural structure. Sweetened juices, sodas and fruit-flavoured drinks can deliver sugar quickly without the same fullness. Frequent sugary drinks may contribute to excess energy intake, weight gain, diabetes and higher cardiovascular risk.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Instead of a bottled fruit drink at break time, a teacher carries a banana, orange or slice of pawpaw and drinks safe water.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Keep washed whole fruit ready for snacks.
2. Choose water with meals and between meals.
3. Read labels for added sugar in fruit drinks.
4. Limit large servings of juice, even when homemade.

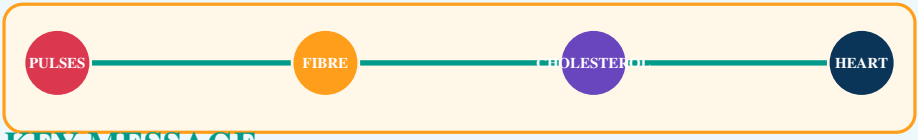
MYTH	Any drink with fruit on the label is equal to whole fruit.
FACT	Many fruit drinks contain added sugar and little fibre; whole fruit is usually the better routine choice.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Keep washed whole fruit ready for snacks.
- ☐ Choose water with meals and between meals.
- ☐ Read labels for added sugar in fruit drinks.
- ☐ Limit large servings of juice, even when homemade.

13. Eat Beans, Peas, Lentils and Other Pulses Regularly

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Pulses are affordable heart-smart foods that provide plant protein and fibre.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Beans, peas, lentils and cowpeas can replace some fatty or processed meat. Their soluble fibre supports healthier cholesterol levels, while their protein and slow-digesting carbohydrate improve fullness. Preparation matters: excessive salt, fatty meat or large amounts of oil can weaken the benefit.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A household prepares beans with tomatoes, onions and greens, serves a sensible portion of matooke and uses less fatty meat during the week.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Include pulses in several meals each week.
2. Soak dry beans and cook them until properly soft.
3. Flavour with herbs, onions and spices before extra salt.
4. Replace some processed or fatty meat with pulses.

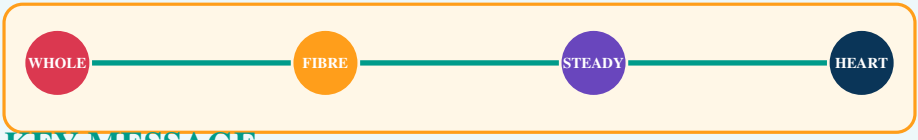
MYTH	A meal without meat cannot provide useful protein.
FACT	Pulses provide valuable plant protein and can be combined with varied foods across the day.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Include pulses in several meals each week.
- ☐ Soak dry beans and cook them until properly soft.
- ☐ Flavour with herbs, onions and spices before extra salt.
- ☐ Replace some processed or fatty meat with pulses.

14. Choose Whole Grains and High-Fibre Staples

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Choose less-refined grains and fibre-rich staples whenever practical.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Whole grains retain more fibre and nutrients than highly refined grains. Fibre supports healthy digestion, fullness, cholesterol and blood-sugar control. In Uganda, practical choices may include whole maize, millet, sorghum, oats, brown rice and higher-fibre bread when available.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A family mixes millet porridge into the breakfast routine and sometimes replaces refined white bread or rice with a higher-fibre option.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Check labels for whole grain as a main ingredient.
2. Introduce higher-fibre staples gradually.
3. Drink sufficient safe water as fibre increases.
4. Keep portions balanced with vegetables and protein.

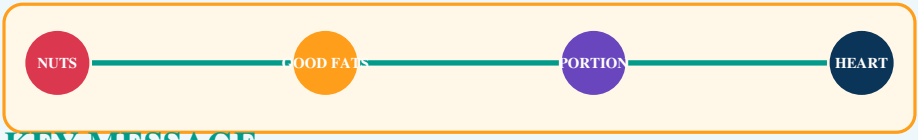
MYTH	Brown colour always proves that bread is whole grain.
FACT	Colour can come from other ingredients; check the ingredient list where labels are available.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check labels for whole grain as a main ingredient.
- ☐ Introduce higher-fibre staples gradually.
- ☐ Drink sufficient safe water as fibre increases.
- ☐ Keep portions balanced with vegetables and protein.

15. Include Nuts and Seeds in Sensible Portions

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Unsalted nuts and seeds can add healthy fats, fibre and plant protein to meals.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Groundnuts, simsim, sunflower seeds and other nuts or seeds can replace less healthy snacks. They are energy-dense, so a small portion is enough. Salted, sugar-coated or heavily fried versions add unnecessary sodium, sugar or fat.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A trader carries a small container of unsalted roasted groundnuts instead of buying fried snacks during the afternoon.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose unsalted or lightly salted varieties.
2. Use a small handful rather than eating from a large bag.
3. Add seeds to porridge, vegetables or beans.
4. Avoid nuts coated with excess sugar or fat.

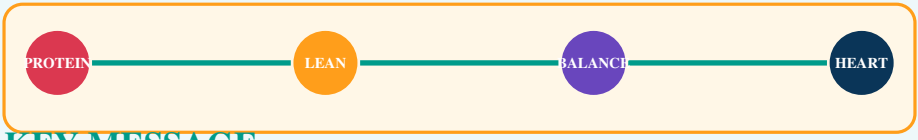
MYTH	Because nuts are healthy, any quantity is suitable.
FACT	Nuts are nutritious but energy-dense; type and portion both matter.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose unsalted or lightly salted varieties.
- ☐ Use a small handful rather than eating from a large bag.
- ☐ Add seeds to porridge, vegetables or beans.
- ☐ Avoid nuts coated with excess sugar or fat.

16. Choose Fish and Other Lean Protein Sources

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Build meals around beans, fish, skinless poultry and other lean protein choices.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Replacing fatty and processed meats with leaner proteins can reduce saturated fat and sodium. Fish provides protein and, in some species, beneficial unsaturated fats. Grilling, steaming or stewing with little oil is preferable to frequent deep-frying.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At a family meal, grilled fish or beans are served with vegetables and a modest staple portion instead of fried sausage and fatty meat.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose beans or peas often as the main protein.
2. Remove visible fat and poultry skin where appropriate.
3. Prefer grilled, steamed or stewed fish to deep-fried fish.
4. Limit processed meats such as sausages and bacon.

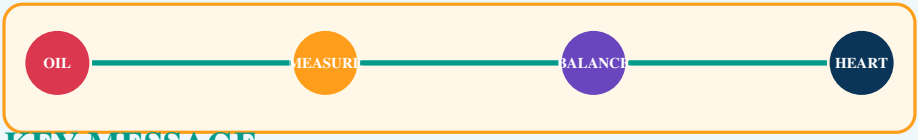
MYTH	Every protein food affects the heart in the same way.
FACT	Source, processing, cooking method and portion influence cardiovascular health.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose beans or peas often as the main protein.
- ☐ Remove visible fat and poultry skin where appropriate.
- ☐ Prefer grilled, steamed or stewed fish to deep-fried fish.
- ☐ Limit processed meats such as sausages and bacon.

17. Use Healthy Unsaturated Oils in Small Amounts

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Prefer unsaturated oils, but remember that all oils are concentrated sources of energy.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Replacing butter, ghee and other saturated fats with suitable unsaturated vegetable oils can support healthier blood lipids. The benefit is replacement, not simply adding more oil. Repeatedly heating oil or deep-frying food should be avoided.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A cook measures a small amount of vegetable oil with a spoon, uses onions and spices for flavour and avoids pouring oil directly from a large container.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Measure oil instead of pouring freely.
2. Use unsaturated vegetable oils where available.
3. Avoid repeatedly reheating or reusing frying oil.
4. Steam, boil, bake or grill more often.

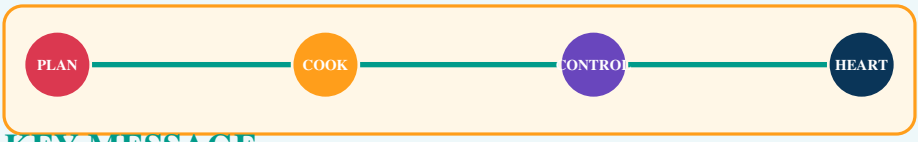
MYTH	Heart-healthy oil can be eaten without limit.
FACT	Unsaturated oil is preferable to saturated fat, but excess still adds substantial energy.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Measure oil instead of pouring freely.
- ☐ Use unsaturated vegetable oils where available.
- ☐ Avoid repeatedly reheating or reusing frying oil.
- ☐ Steam, boil, bake or grill more often.

18. Prepare More Meals at Home

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Home preparation gives greater control over salt, fat, sugar, ingredients and portions.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Restaurant, takeaway and street foods may contain more salt, oil or large portions than expected. Cooking at home does not automatically make a meal healthy, but it allows deliberate choices and safer food handling. Simple meals can still be nutritious.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

On Sunday, a family cooks beans, washes vegetables and plans quick weekday meals so hunger does not always lead to chips or fast food.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Plan several simple meals before the week begins.
2. Keep basic foods such as beans, vegetables and whole grains.
3. Measure salt and oil during preparation.
4. Pack leftovers safely for the next meal.

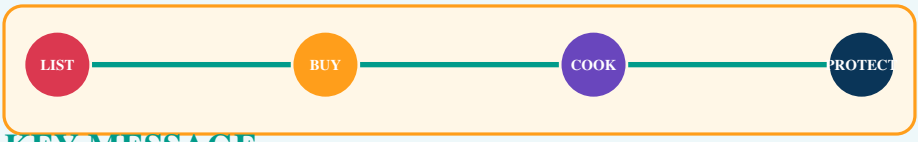
MYTH	A heart-healthy home meal must be expensive or complicated.
FACT	Simple local foods can make balanced, affordable meals when prepared thoughtfully.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Plan several simple meals before the week begins.
- ☐ Keep basic foods such as beans, vegetables and whole grains.
- ☐ Measure salt and oil during preparation.
- ☐ Pack leftovers safely for the next meal.

19. Plan Balanced Meals Before Shopping

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

A plan and shopping list make heart-healthy choices easier before hunger and advertising take control.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Planning helps households include vegetables, fruits, pulses, whole grains and lean proteins while limiting impulse purchases of sugary, salty or fried foods. It can reduce waste and improve use of seasonal produce. The plan should match budget, storage and cooking facilities.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Before visiting the market, a parent lists greens, tomatoes, beans, fruit, millet flour and fish, then avoids buying several unplanned sugary drinks.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Check food already available before shopping.
2. Plan meals around seasonal, affordable foods.
3. Write a list by food group and follow it.
4. Do not shop while extremely hungry when possible.

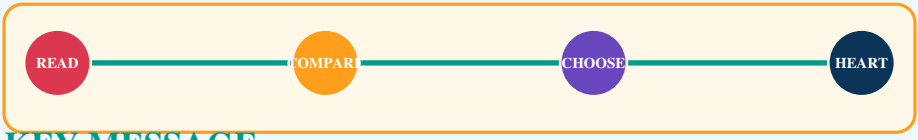
MYTH	Healthy meal planning is only for wealthy families.
FACT	Planning can protect both the heart and the household budget.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check food already available before shopping.
- ☐ Plan meals around seasonal, affordable foods.
- ☐ Write a list by food group and follow it.
- ☐ Do not shop while extremely hungry when possible.

20. Read Food Labels Before Buying Packaged Foods

SECTION B: BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY EATING PATTERN



KEY MESSAGE

Labels can help compare sodium, added sugar, saturated fat, serving size and ingredients.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Front-of-pack claims can be incomplete or misleading. Nutrition information and ingredient lists provide a better basis for comparison, although formats vary. A small-looking packet may contain several servings. Fresh or minimally processed foods remain good choices when labels are absent.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Two breads both claim to be healthy. A shopper compares serving size, ingredients, fibre, sodium and sugar before choosing.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Check the serving size before comparing numbers.
2. Compare similar products for sodium and saturated fat.
3. Look for added sugars and refined grains in ingredients.
4. Treat claims such as “natural” or “light” cautiously.

MYTH	A health claim on the front proves the whole product is healthy.
FACT	Use the full label and the overall dietary pattern, not one marketing phrase.

MY HEART-HEALTHY FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check the serving size before comparing numbers.
- ☐ Compare similar products for sodium and saturated fat.
- ☐ Look for added sugars and refined grains in ingredients.
- ☐ Treat claims such as “natural” or “light” cautiously.

BUILD A HEART-HEALTHY PLATE



REAL-LIFE HEART PROTECTION IN ACTION

VEGETABLES	Use varied colours and local seasonal produce.
PULSES	Choose beans, peas and lentils often.
WHOLE FOODS	Prefer whole grains, fruit, nuts and minimally processed foods.
PLAN AHEAD	Shop with a list and prepare more meals at home.

VARIETY - BALANCE - PORTION - CONSISTENCY

SECTION C

LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



WAYS 21-30: LESS SALT, HARMFUL FAT AND ADDED SUGAR

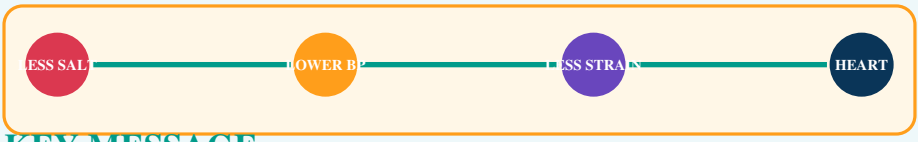
SMALL FOOD SWAPS PROTECT ARTERIES

This section identifies foods that can quietly raise blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and body weight. It gives practical Ugandan examples for reducing sodium, saturated and trans fats, added sugar, fried food, processed meat and oversized portions.

CHECK - SWAP - PORTION - REPEAT

21. Reduce Salt and High-Sodium Seasonings

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Use less salt during cooking and at the table. Taste buds can gradually adjust to less salty food.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Too much sodium draws water into the bloodstream. This can raise blood pressure and make the heart and blood vessels work harder. High blood pressure often causes no symptoms, yet it is a major cause of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney disease. Salt, stock cubes and salty seasonings all add sodium.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A family in Ntungamo stops adding salt at the table. The cook measures a smaller amount, then builds flavour with onions, garlic, lemon, ginger, curry spices and fresh herbs.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Remove the salt shaker from the dining table.
2. Measure salt with a spoon instead of pouring freely.
3. Use herbs, spices, lemon, garlic and onion for flavour.
4. Reduce salty stock cubes and mixed seasonings gradually.

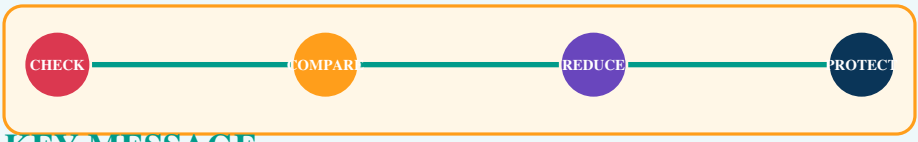
MYTH	Sea salt, rock salt and pink salt do not affect blood pressure.
FACT	These salts still contain sodium; the amount used matters more than colour or source.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Remove the salt shaker from the dining table.
- ☐ Measure salt with a spoon instead of pouring freely.
- ☐ Use herbs, spices, lemon, garlic and onion for flavour.
- ☐ Reduce salty stock cubes and mixed seasonings gradually.

22. Limit Processed and Packaged Salty Foods

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Packaged foods can supply large amounts of sodium even when they do not taste extremely salty.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Instant noodles, crisps, salty biscuits, canned products, seasoning powders and some breads can add substantial sodium. Eating several such foods in one day compounds the total. Labels help when available: compare similar products per serving and per 100 grams, and remember that a packet may contain more than one serving.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A commuter replaces daily crisps and instant noodles with fruit, unsalted groundnuts and a home-packed bean meal. When buying bread, she compares sodium on two labels.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose fresh or minimally processed foods more often.
2. Compare sodium figures on similar packaged products.
3. Drain and rinse canned beans or vegetables when suitable.
4. Keep salty snacks for rare occasions and use small portions.

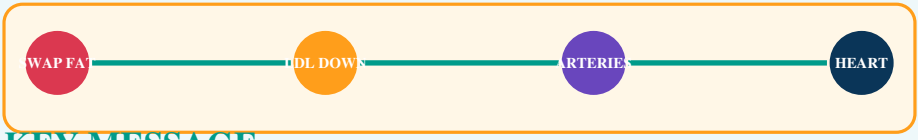
MYTH	If a food does not taste very salty, it must be low in sodium.
FACT	Sodium can be hidden in bread, sauces and packaged foods; use the label where possible.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose fresh or minimally processed foods more often.
- ☐ Compare sodium figures on similar packaged products.
- ☐ Drain and rinse canned beans or vegetables when suitable.
- ☐ Keep salty snacks for rare occasions and use small portions.

23. Reduce Saturated Fat from Fatty Meat and Full-Fat Foods

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Replace foods high in saturated fat with beans, fish, lean meat and unsaturated oils rather than simply adding more fat.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

A diet high in saturated fat can raise LDL cholesterol. Excess LDL contributes to fatty plaque inside arteries, narrowing blood flow and increasing the chance of heart attack or stroke. Common sources include fatty meat, poultry skin, butter, ghee, cream and some baked or fried foods.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

For Sunday lunch, a household trims visible fat, removes poultry skin, serves beans and vegetables, and uses a measured amount of vegetable oil instead of ghee.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Trim visible fat and choose leaner cuts of meat.
2. Remove poultry skin before eating.
3. Replace some meat meals with beans, peas or lentils.
4. Use unsaturated oil sparingly instead of butter or ghee.

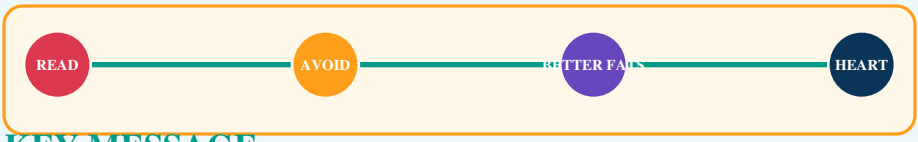
MYTH	All dietary fat should be completely removed.
FACT	The goal is healthier types and sensible amounts, especially replacing saturated fat with unsaturated fat.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Trim visible fat and choose leaner cuts of meat.
- ☐ Remove poultry skin before eating.
- ☐ Replace some meat meals with beans, peas or lentils.
- ☐ Use unsaturated oil sparingly instead of butter or ghee.

24. Avoid Industrial Trans Fats

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Avoid foods made with partially hydrogenated oils and limit commercial fried and baked foods of uncertain fat quality.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Industrial trans fat raises LDL cholesterol and can lower protective HDL cholesterol. It promotes inflammation and increases cardiovascular risk. It may occur in products made with partially hydrogenated oils, shortening or repeatedly used frying fats. Regulations and labels vary, so the ingredient list and food source matter.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A shopper sees “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” in the ingredients of a snack and chooses fruit and unsalted nuts instead. A café owner stops repeatedly reheating frying oil.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Check ingredient lists for partially hydrogenated oils.
2. Limit commercial pastries, doughnuts and deep-fried snacks.
3. Do not repeatedly heat or reuse frying oil.
4. Choose steamed, boiled, baked or grilled foods more often.

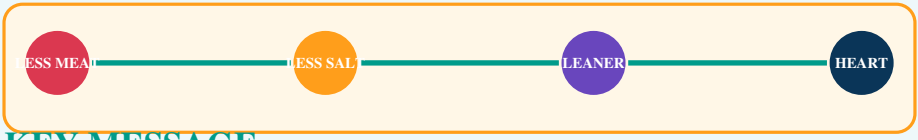
MYTH	Vegetable shortening is automatically heart-healthy because it comes from plants.
FACT	Some shortenings may contain harmful trans or saturated fats; check the ingredients and use sparingly.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check ingredient lists for partially hydrogenated oils.
- ☐ Limit commercial pastries, doughnuts and deep-fried snacks.
- ☐ Do not repeatedly heat or reuse frying oil.
- ☐ Choose steamed, boiled, baked or grilled foods more often.

25. Limit Sausages, Bacon and Other Processed Meats

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Processed meats should be occasional foods, not everyday protein choices.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Sausages, bacon, hot dogs, corned meat and similar products are often high in sodium and saturated fat. Frequent intake can make blood-pressure and cholesterol control more difficult. A better routine uses beans, peas, fish, eggs in sensible amounts, skinless poultry and lean unprocessed meat.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Instead of serving sausage most mornings, a family rotates beans, egg, groundnut paste and leftover vegetables, with fruit when available.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Reserve processed meat for infrequent occasions.
2. Use beans or peas as the main protein more often.
3. Choose fresh lean meat rather than cured or smoked meat.
4. Keep portions modest and add vegetables to the plate.

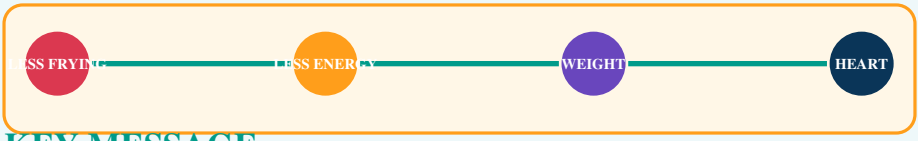
MYTH	Processed meat is harmless when the portion looks small.
FACT	Small servings can still add considerable sodium, especially when eaten frequently.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Reserve processed meat for infrequent occasions.
- ☐ Use beans or peas as the main protein more often.
- ☐ Choose fresh lean meat rather than cured or smoked meat.
- ☐ Keep portions modest and add vegetables to the plate.

26. Reduce Heavily Fried Foods

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Make deep-fried food occasional and use cooking methods that need little added oil.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Deep-frying increases the energy density of food and may add saturated or trans fat depending on the oil and handling. Frequent large portions can contribute to weight gain, unhealthy cholesterol and poor blood-sugar control. Reused oil also deteriorates with repeated high-temperature heating.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A roadside-food customer changes from daily chips and fried chicken to matooke, beans and greens on most days, keeping a small fried portion for an occasional meal.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Steam, boil, grill, roast or stew more often.
2. Use a measured amount of oil in a pan.
3. Avoid dark, smoking or repeatedly reused oil.
4. Pair an occasional fried food with vegetables and water.

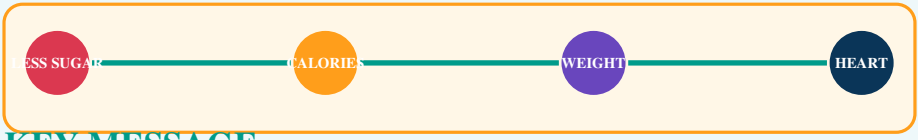
MYTH	Food fried in vegetable oil is always good for the heart.
FACT	The amount, temperature, reuse of oil and frequency of fried meals all matter.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Steam, boil, grill, roast or stew more often.
- ☐ Use a measured amount of oil in a pan.
- ☐ Avoid dark, smoking or repeatedly reused oil.
- ☐ Pair an occasional fried food with vegetables and water.

27. Limit Foods and Drinks High in Added Sugar

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Reduce added sugar in drinks, sweets, biscuits, cakes, flavoured yoghurt and other packaged foods.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Added sugar supplies energy with little fullness or nutritional value. Frequent excess can promote weight gain, high triglycerides, tooth decay and type 2 diabetes, all of which are connected with cardiovascular risk. Sugar may appear under several names in an ingredient list.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

An office worker reduces sugar in tea one spoon at a time and replaces daily biscuits with fruit or a small portion of unsalted groundnuts.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Reduce sugar in tea, coffee and porridge gradually.
2. Keep sweets, cakes and biscuits for occasional use.
3. Compare labels for added sugar or total sugars.
4. Choose plain foods and add whole fruit for sweetness.

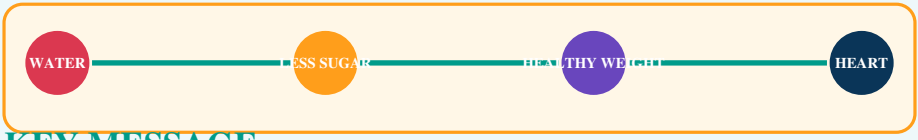
MYTH	Brown sugar and honey can be used freely because they are natural.
FACT	They are still free or added sugars and should be limited.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Reduce sugar in tea, coffee and porridge gradually.
- ☐ Keep sweets, cakes and biscuits for occasional use.
- ☐ Compare labels for added sugar or total sugars.
- ☐ Choose plain foods and add whole fruit for sweetness.

28. Choose Water Instead of Sugar-Sweetened Drinks

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Make safe water the normal drink for thirst and with meals.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Sodas, energy drinks, sweetened juices and heavily sweetened tea can deliver a large amount of sugar quickly. Liquid calories may not produce the same fullness as solid food, making excess intake easy. Regular use can support weight gain, diabetes and unhealthy triglyceride levels.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A driver carries safe drinking water and chooses an unsweetened drink at lunch instead of buying two sodas during each working day.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Carry safe water in a clean reusable bottle.
2. Serve water routinely with family meals.
3. Avoid energy drinks for ordinary hydration.
4. Flavour water with lemon, cucumber or mint without sugar.

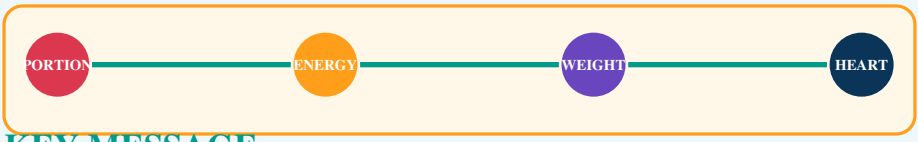
MYTH	Fruit-flavoured soda or energy drink counts as a serving of fruit.
FACT	Sweetened drinks do not provide the fibre and fullness of whole fruit.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Carry safe water in a clean reusable bottle.
- ☐ Serve water routinely with family meals.
- ☐ Avoid energy drinks for ordinary hydration.
- ☐ Flavour water with lemon, cucumber or mint without sugar.

29. Control Portions of Energy-Dense Foods

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Even nutritious meals need sensible portions, while fried, sugary and fatty foods need especially small portions.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Large portions make it easy to consume more energy than the body uses. Over time, weight gain around the waist can raise blood pressure, blood sugar and unhealthy blood fats. Portion control is not starvation: it means balancing vegetables, protein and staple foods and responding to hunger and fullness.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At a celebration, a guest starts with vegetables, chooses one moderate serving of the main meal, drinks water and waits before deciding whether more food is needed.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Use a smaller plate when portions tend to be large.
2. Serve vegetables first and include a protein source.
3. Eat slowly and pause before taking a second helping.
4. Place snacks in a small bowl instead of eating from a packet.

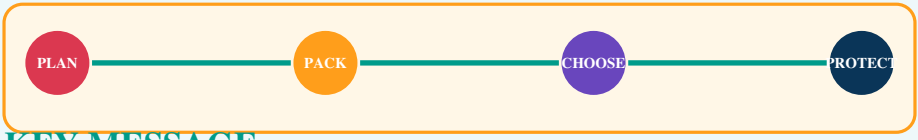
MYTH	Skipping meals is the best way to control portions later.
FACT	Extreme hunger can lead to overeating; regular balanced meals are often easier to manage.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Use a smaller plate when portions tend to be large.
- ☐ Serve vegetables first and include a protein source.
- ☐ Eat slowly and pause before taking a second helping.
- ☐ Place snacks in a small bowl instead of eating from a packet.

30. Replace Frequent Fast Food with Healthier Meals

SECTION C: LIMIT FOODS THAT INCREASE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK



KEY MESSAGE

Plan simple meals and snacks so convenience does not always mean salty, fried or sugary food.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Fast-food meals are often large and high in sodium, refined starch, unhealthy fats and sugary drinks. The problem is frequency and pattern, not one isolated meal. Home-prepared or carefully selected local meals can provide vegetables, pulses, lean protein and more control over salt, oil and portion size.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A student packs fruit and groundnuts, chooses beans with greens at lunch and saves money that was previously spent on chips, sausage and soda.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Plan tomorrow's meal or snack the evening before.
2. Carry fruit, unsalted nuts or a home-prepared meal.
3. When buying food, choose beans, vegetables and grilled items.
4. Order water and avoid automatic meal-size upgrades.

MYTH	Healthy meals always take longer and cost more than fast food.
FACT	Simple planned meals using local staples, beans and seasonal produce can be quick and affordable.

MY HEART-SMART FOOD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Plan tomorrow's meal or snack the evening before.
- ☐ Carry fruit, unsalted nuts or a home-prepared meal.
- ☐ When buying food, choose beans, vegetables and grilled items.
- ☐ Order water and avoid automatic meal-size upgrades.

CHOOSE LESS OF THE HEART-RISK RAISERS



MAKE THE HEALTHIER CHOICE THE EASY CHOICE

LESS SALT	Season with herbs and compare sodium on labels.
BETTER FATS	Replace saturated and trans fats with healthier choices.
LESS SUGAR	Choose water and keep sweet foods occasional.
SMART PORTIONS	Plan meals and reduce fried or fast-food portions.

LESS SALT - BETTER FAT - WATER FIRST - RIGHT PORTION

SECTION D

MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



WAYS 31-40: BUILD MOVEMENT INTO EVERY DAY

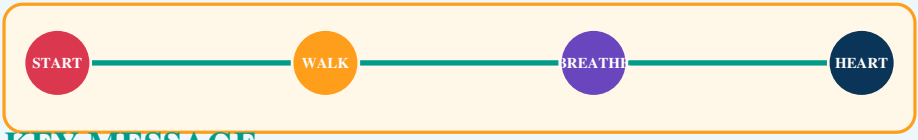
EVERY SAFE STEP HELPS THE HEART

Regular movement strengthens the heart, improves circulation and supports blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, body weight and wellbeing. This section combines walking, aerobic exercise, strength, active travel, recreation, household work and less sitting.

START SMALL - MOVE OFTEN - BUILD GRADUALLY

31. Walk Regularly at a Comfortable, Purposeful Pace

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

Regular purposeful walking is one of the simplest ways to strengthen the heart and improve circulation.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Walking uses large muscle groups repeatedly, helping the heart pump more efficiently. With consistency it can support healthier blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, mood and body weight. A useful pace feels purposeful: breathing is quicker, but most people can still speak in short sentences.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A shopkeeper in Kampala begins with a 15-minute walk before opening and another after work. She uses well-lit routes, comfortable shoes and a pace that does not cause pain.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Begin with a time and pace that feel manageable.
2. Walk on safe, even routes and wear supportive footwear.
3. Add a few minutes when the current walk feels easy.
4. Stop and seek help for chest pain, faintness or severe breathlessness.

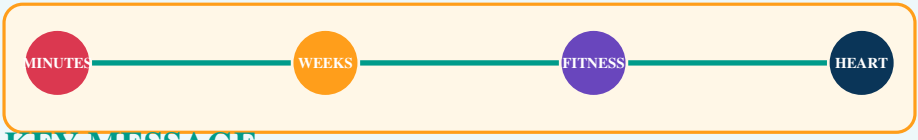
MYTH	Only running or very hard exercise can protect the heart.
FACT	Regular brisk walking can provide important cardiovascular benefits.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Begin with a time and pace that feel manageable.
- ☐ Walk on safe, even routes and wear supportive footwear.
- ☐ Add a few minutes when the current walk feels easy.
- ☐ Stop and seek help for chest pain, faintness or severe breathlessness.

32. Build Toward Recommended Weekly Aerobic Activity

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

Accumulate aerobic activity across the week instead of depending on one exhausting session.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Adults generally benefit from at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week, or an equivalent amount of vigorous activity, plus less sitting. Sessions can be divided across several days and into manageable blocks. People with illness, disability or low fitness still benefit from doing what they safely can.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A teacher schedules 30 minutes of brisk walking on five days. On busy days, he divides it into three 10-minute walks before school, at lunch and after work.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Set a realistic weekly target and record active minutes.
2. Spread activity across at least three days when possible.
3. Combine walking, cycling, dancing or swimming.
4. Increase duration before pushing intensity very high.

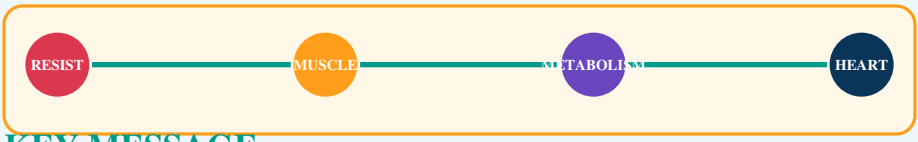
MYTH	Activity counts only when it lasts for a full hour.
FACT	Shorter bouts add up; the weekly pattern and consistency matter.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Set a realistic weekly target and record active minutes.
- ☐ Spread activity across at least three days when possible.
- ☐ Combine walking, cycling, dancing or swimming.
- ☐ Increase duration before pushing intensity very high.

33. Include Muscle-Strengthening Activities

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

Strengthen major muscle groups on two or more days each week, allowing recovery between hard sessions.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Muscle-strengthening activity helps preserve muscle and bone, improves daily function and supports control of blood sugar and body weight. It complements aerobic exercise rather than replacing it. Resistance can come from body weight, bands, safe household objects or gym equipment used with correct technique.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At home, an adult performs chair stands, wall push-ups, step-ups and light resistance-band pulls twice weekly after learning safe form.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Train legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms.
2. Start with light resistance and controlled movements.
3. Breathe continuously rather than holding the breath.
4. Allow recovery and stop if a movement causes sharp pain.

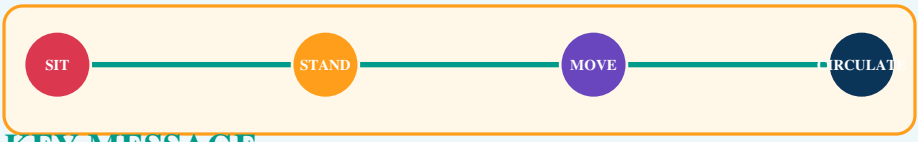
MYTH	Strength training is only for athletes and bodybuilders.
FACT	Appropriate resistance exercise supports heart health and independence at many ages.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Train legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms.
- ☐ Start with light resistance and controlled movements.
- ☐ Breathe continuously rather than holding the breath.
- ☐ Allow recovery and stop if a movement causes sharp pain.

34. Break Up Long Periods of Sitting

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

Interrupt prolonged sitting with brief standing or movement breaks throughout the day.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Long uninterrupted sitting reduces muscle activity and energy use. Even a planned workout does not erase every effect of sitting for many hours. Frequent light movement can improve circulation, reduce stiffness and help regulate blood sugar. The aim is to sit less and move more, within personal ability.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

An office worker sets a reminder every 30 to 60 minutes, stands during calls, walks to speak with colleagues and stretches briefly between tasks.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Stand or move for two to five minutes each hour.
2. Walk during suitable phone calls or work breaks.
3. Place frequently used items far enough away to require movement.
4. Reduce long evening periods of television or phone use.

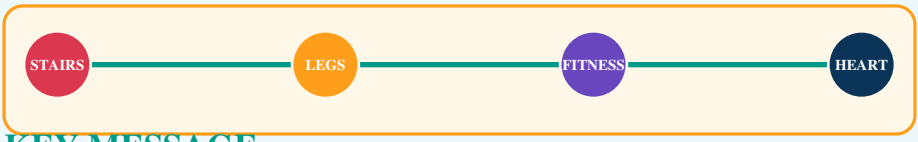
MYTH	One morning workout makes unlimited sitting harmless.
FACT	Exercise is valuable, but breaking up long sitting adds further protection.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Stand or move for two to five minutes each hour.
- ☐ Walk during suitable phone calls or work breaks.
- ☐ Place frequently used items far enough away to require movement.
- ☐ Reduce long evening periods of television or phone use.

35. Use Stairs When Safe and Practical

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

Stair climbing can turn an ordinary journey into a short aerobic and strengthening activity.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Climbing stairs raises heart rate and works the large muscles of the legs. Repeated small choices can increase daily activity without special equipment. Safety comes first: use a handrail, good lighting and stable footwear, and avoid stairs when pain, poor balance or a health condition makes them unsafe.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A worker begins by climbing one floor and using the lift for the rest. As fitness improves, she adds another floor without rushing.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose one or two flights instead of the lift when safe.
2. Use the handrail and place the whole foot on each step.
3. Climb at a steady pace without racing.
4. Use a safer option when carrying loads or feeling unwell.

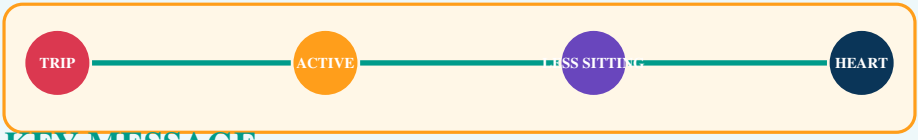
MYTH	Stairs help only if many floors are climbed at once.
FACT	Small repeated stair choices can meaningfully increase daily activity.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose one or two flights instead of the lift when safe.
- ☐ Use the handrail and place the whole foot on each step.
- ☐ Climb at a steady pace without racing.
- ☐ Use a safer option when carrying loads or feeling unwell.

36. Walk or Cycle Short Journeys Where It Is Safe

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

Replace some short motorised trips with active travel when the route, weather and traffic conditions are safe.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Active travel builds movement into daily life and can improve fitness without needing a separate exercise session. Walking or cycling also reduces time spent sitting. Road safety, visibility, hydration, protective equipment and local conditions must guide the decision; unsafe roads should not be treated as exercise routes.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

For a nearby market trip, a resident walks in daylight using a quieter route. A cyclist wears a helmet, uses lights and reflective clothing and obeys road rules.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Map a safe route before beginning.
2. Walk facing traffic where appropriate and use crossings.
3. For cycling, use a helmet, lights and visible clothing.
4. Avoid distracted travel and dangerous traffic conditions.

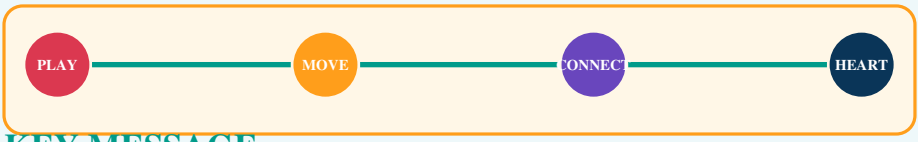
MYTH	Any road is suitable for walking or cycling exercise.
FACT	Heart health should never come at the cost of road safety.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Map a safe route before beginning.
- ☐ Walk facing traffic where appropriate and use crossings.
- ☐ For cycling, use a helmet, lights and visible clothing.
- ☐ Avoid distracted travel and dangerous traffic conditions.

37. Participate in Sport or Active Recreation

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

Sport, dance and active recreation can make heart-protective movement enjoyable and social.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Football, netball, swimming, dancing, skipping and other active recreation can improve aerobic fitness, coordination and mood. Enjoyment and companionship help people remain consistent. Warm-up, appropriate intensity, water, suitable equipment and respect for injuries reduce avoidable harm.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A community group plays moderate five-a-side football twice weekly. Members warm up, rotate positions, drink water and stop play when someone feels unwell.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose an activity that matches your ability and interest.
2. Warm up gradually and cool down after vigorous play.
3. Use safe equipment, footwear and playing surfaces.
4. Rest and assess injuries rather than playing through severe pain.

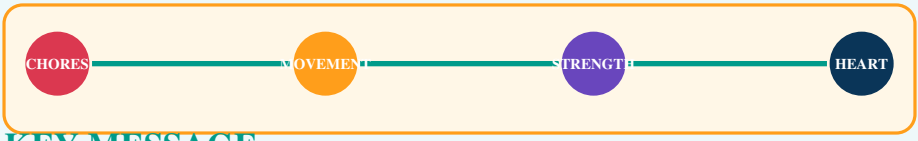
MYTH	Competitive sport is the only recreation that improves fitness.
FACT	Non-competitive dance, play and leisure activity can also strengthen the heart.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose an activity that matches your ability and interest.
- ☐ Warm up gradually and cool down after vigorous play.
- ☐ Use safe equipment, footwear and playing surfaces.
- ☐ Rest and assess injuries rather than playing through severe pain.

38. Do Active Household Work and Gardening

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

Household work and gardening can contribute to daily movement when performed actively and safely.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Sweeping, mopping, washing, digging, weeding and carrying light loads can raise energy use and work several muscle groups. Intensity varies, so these activities can supplement planned walking and strengthening. Good posture, correct lifting and rest breaks are important, especially in heat.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A family shares active chores: sweeping the compound, hand-washing, tending vegetables and carrying small watering containers, with breaks and safe lifting.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Work at a steady pace that raises breathing slightly.
2. Bend the knees and keep loads close when lifting.
3. Alternate demanding and lighter tasks.
4. Use shade, safe water and rest during hot conditions.

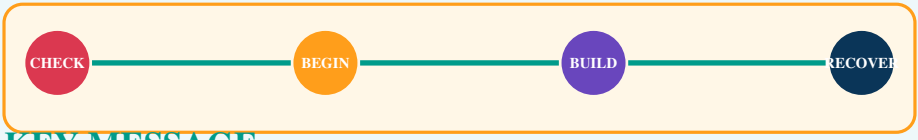
MYTH	Only exercise done in sportswear counts as physical activity.
FACT	Active chores and gardening can contribute to movement and fitness.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Work at a steady pace that raises breathing slightly.
- ☐ Bend the knees and keep loads close when lifting.
- ☐ Alternate demanding and lighter tasks.
- ☐ Use shade, safe water and rest during hot conditions.

39. Increase Activity Gradually After Illness or Inactivity

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

After illness, injury or a long inactive period, restart below your old level and progress step by step.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Fitness and strength decline during inactivity. Trying to resume too quickly can cause extreme fatigue, falls, pain or injury. People recovering from a heart event, stroke, major infection or surgery may need a clinician-guided rehabilitation plan. Warning symptoms require prompt attention.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After several weeks of illness, a farmer begins with five-minute walks on level ground, rests, records symptoms and increases only after the activity feels comfortable.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask a health professional when recovery has been serious.
2. Start with short, light sessions on level ground.
3. Increase one factor at a time: time, frequency or intensity.
4. Stop for chest pressure, fainting or unusual severe breathlessness.

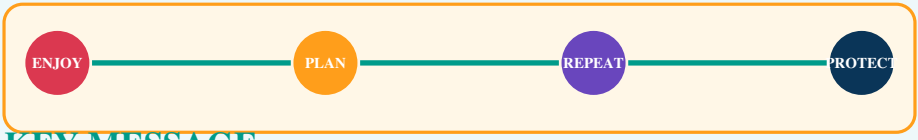
MYTH	Returning immediately to the old routine proves recovery.
FACT	Gradual progression is safer and more likely to become sustainable.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask a health professional when recovery has been serious.
- ☐ Start with short, light sessions on level ground.
- ☐ Increase one factor at a time: time, frequency or intensity.
- ☐ Stop for chest pressure, fainting or unusual severe breathlessness.

40. Choose Enjoyable Activities You Can Maintain

SECTION D: MOVE MORE AND SIT LESS



KEY MESSAGE

The best activity plan is safe, enjoyable, affordable and realistic enough to continue for years.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Heart protection comes from repeated behaviour, not a brief burst of motivation. Enjoyable activities are easier to schedule and resume after interruptions. Variety prevents boredom and spreads physical stress across the body. Social support, simple tracking and backup plans help turn movement into a normal routine.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A parent enjoys music, so she dances at home three evenings, walks with a friend twice weekly and uses indoor marching when rain prevents outdoor activity.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. List activities you genuinely enjoy and can access.
2. Schedule specific days, times and companions.
3. Keep indoor and low-cost backup choices.
4. Review progress monthly and adjust without abandoning the goal.

MYTH	A painful or punishing routine is always more effective.
FACT	A safe activity you enjoy and repeat is more useful than an extreme plan you stop.

MY ACTIVE-HEART CHECKLIST

- ☐ List activities you genuinely enjoy and can access.
- ☐ Schedule specific days, times and companions.
- ☐ Keep indoor and low-cost backup choices.
- ☐ Review progress monthly and adjust without abandoning the goal.

MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF DAILY LIFE



ACTIVE LIVING PROTECTS THE HEART

WALK OFTEN	Use purposeful walking and safe active travel.
BUILD FITNESS	Combine aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity.
SIT LESS	Break long sitting with brief movement throughout the day.
KEEP GOING	Choose enjoyable activity and increase gradually.

MOVE MORE - SIT LESS - BUILD GRADUALLY - ENJOY IT

SECTION E

ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



WAYS 41-50: BUILD HABITS THAT LAST

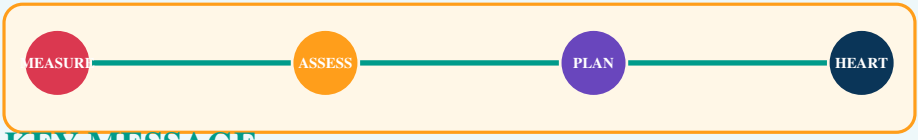
HEALTH IS MORE THAN A NUMBER

Healthy weight management combines nourishing food, regular movement, realistic portions, mindful eating and qualified support when needed. The aim is improved blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, fitness and wellbeing - not shame or extreme dieting.

ASSESS - PLAN - PRACTISE - MAINTAIN

41. Know a Healthy Weight Range for Your Body

SECTION E: ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



KEY MESSAGE

Healthy weight is a range, not one perfect number, and it should be interpreted with age, build, health and waist size.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Excess body fat, especially around the abdomen, can raise blood pressure, LDL cholesterol, triglycerides and blood sugar. These changes increase strain on the heart and arteries. Body-mass index is a useful screening measure for many adults, but it does not directly measure fat and should not be used alone.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At a clinic, an adult has height, weight, waist and blood pressure checked. The health worker considers family history and activity before discussing a realistic range.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

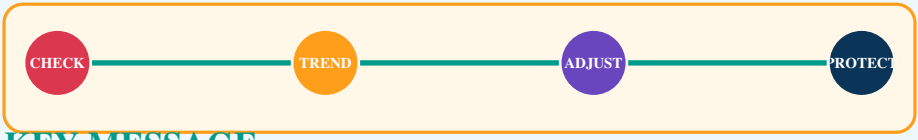
1. Measure height and weight accurately rather than guessing.
2. Ask a qualified health worker to interpret the results.
3. Consider waist size, blood pressure and blood tests together.
4. Focus on health habits, not appearance or comparison.

MYTH	One ideal weight applies to every person of the same height.
FACT	A healthy range depends on several health factors and requires sensible interpretation.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Measure height and weight accurately rather than guessing.
- ☐ Ask a qualified health worker to interpret the results.
- ☐ Consider waist size, blood pressure and blood tests together.
- ☐ Focus on health habits, not appearance or comparison.

42. Monitor Weight Trends Without Becoming Obsessive



KEY MESSAGE

Track the direction of change at sensible intervals; daily fluctuations do not always represent fat gain or loss.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Body weight changes during the day with food, water, clothing and bowel contents. A consistent weekly or fortnightly measurement can reveal a meaningful trend without encouraging anxiety. Rapid unexplained gain may also reflect fluid retention and needs medical attention, particularly with swelling or breathlessness.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A teacher weighs once each Saturday morning on the same scale and records the result monthly. She avoids weighing after every meal.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Use the same reliable scale, time and similar clothing.
2. Record weekly or fortnightly rather than repeatedly each day.
3. Review the trend across several weeks.
4. Seek care for rapid unexplained gain, swelling or breathlessness.

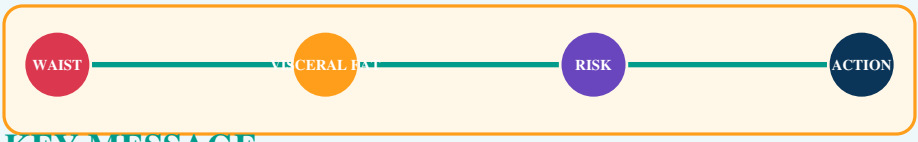
MYTH	A change on the scale from one day to the next is always body fat.
FACT	Short-term changes often reflect fluid, food or measurement conditions.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Use the same reliable scale, time and similar clothing.
- ☐ Record weekly or fortnightly rather than repeatedly each day.
- ☐ Review the trend across several weeks.
- ☐ Seek care for rapid unexplained gain, swelling or breathlessness.

43. Pay Attention to Increasing Waist Size

SECTION E: ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



KEY MESSAGE

A growing waist can signal increasing abdominal fat even when total body weight changes little.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Fat stored deep around abdominal organs is strongly linked with insulin resistance, abnormal blood fats, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Waist measurement adds useful information to weight and BMI. Thresholds vary by sex and population, so a trained health worker should interpret the number.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A shopkeeper notices trousers becoming tight. Instead of ignoring it, he measures his waist consistently, checks blood pressure and begins a food-and-activity plan.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Measure midway around the abdomen using a level tape.
2. Measure after breathing out normally without pulling the tape tight.
3. Track the trend under similar conditions.
4. Discuss an increasing waist with a qualified health worker.

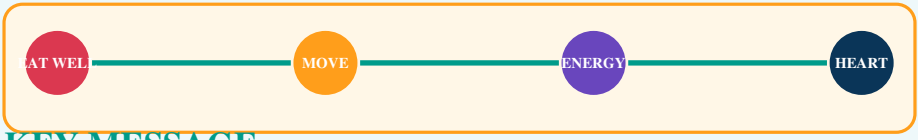
MYTH	Waist size matters only for appearance.
FACT	Increasing abdominal fat can indicate rising metabolic and heart risk.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Measure midway around the abdomen using a level tape.
- ☐ Measure after breathing out normally without pulling the tape tight.
- ☐ Track the trend under similar conditions.
- ☐ Discuss an increasing waist with a qualified health worker.

44. Combine Healthy Eating with Regular Activity

SECTION E: ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



KEY MESSAGE

Sustainable weight management works best when nutritious eating and regular movement support each other.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Food choices influence energy intake and nutrient quality, while activity uses energy, preserves muscle and improves fitness. Relying on exercise alone may not overcome frequent large, sugary or fried meals. Severe dieting without activity can reduce muscle and be difficult to maintain. The combined pattern protects the heart beyond weight change.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A parent fills more of the plate with vegetables, replaces soda with water and walks briskly most days while doing strengthening exercises twice weekly.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Build meals around vegetables, pulses and minimally processed foods.
2. Choose water and reduce sugary drinks.
3. Accumulate aerobic activity across the week.
4. Include safe muscle-strengthening activity regularly.

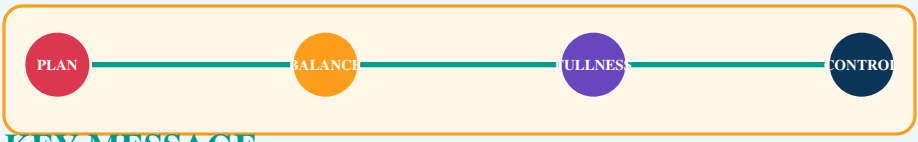
MYTH	Exercise cancels every food choice, regardless of quantity.
FACT	Eating pattern and activity work together; neither makes the other irrelevant.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Build meals around vegetables, pulses and minimally processed foods.

45. Eat Regular, Balanced Meals

SECTION E: ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



KEY MESSAGE

Regular balanced meals can reduce extreme hunger and make portions easier to manage.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Long gaps without food may lead some people to eat rapidly or choose large portions later. Balanced meals provide fibre, protein and nourishing carbohydrates that support fullness and steady energy. Regular does not mean constant eating; timing should suit the person, medicines, work and cultural pattern.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A busy driver plans breakfast, carries beans and vegetables for lunch and keeps fruit for a genuine hunger break instead of waiting until late evening.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

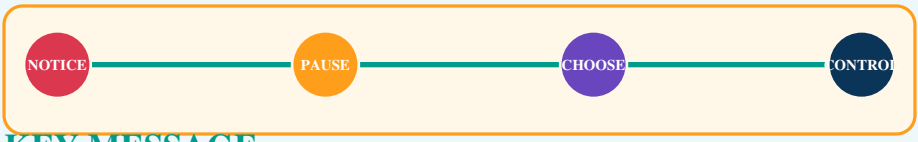
1. Plan meal times that fit work and health needs.
2. Include vegetables, protein and a sensible staple portion.
3. Prepare a healthy option before extreme hunger develops.
4. Avoid turning regular meals into continuous snacking.

MYTH	Skipping meals always produces faster, healthier weight loss.
FACT	For many people it increases hunger and makes later overeating more likely.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Plan meal times that fit work and health needs.
- ☐ Include vegetables, protein and a sensible staple portion.
- ☐ Prepare a healthy option before extreme hunger develops.
- ☐ Avoid turning regular meals into continuous snacking.

46. Avoid Eating When Not Physically Hungry



KEY MESSAGE

Learn to separate physical hunger from boredom, stress, habit, thirst and food cues.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Physical hunger usually builds gradually and is satisfied by a normal meal. Emotional or cue-driven eating may begin suddenly and focus on one specific food even after enough has been eaten. Repeated eating without hunger can add excess energy. Emotions still deserve care; they should not be judged or ignored.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After a stressful meeting, an office worker wants biscuits. He pauses, drinks water, walks briefly and calls a friend, then eats later when genuine hunger appears.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Pause and rate hunger before unplanned eating.
2. Check whether thirst, stress, boredom or habit is driving the urge.
3. Use a non-food response such as walking, rest or conversation.
4. If hunger is real, choose a planned nourishing snack or meal.

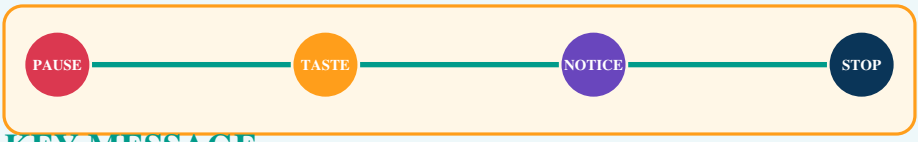
MYTH	Every desire to eat means the body needs energy immediately.
FACT	Food cues and emotions can create an urge even without physical hunger.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Pause and rate hunger before unplanned eating.
- ☐ Check whether thirst, stress, boredom or habit is driving the urge.
- ☐ Use a non-food response such as walking, rest or conversation.
- ☐ If hunger is real, choose a planned nourishing snack or meal.

47. Practise Mindful Eating and Eat Slowly

SECTION E: ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



KEY MESSAGE

Give meals enough time and attention to notice flavour, hunger and comfortable fullness.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Eating very quickly or while distracted can make it easy to pass comfortable fullness before the body registers satisfaction. Mindful eating means noticing the food and the body without judgement. It is not a strict diet; it is a skill that can improve enjoyment and portion awareness.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A family turns off the television during supper, sits together, chews carefully and pauses halfway through the meal before deciding whether more is needed.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Sit down and remove screens during meals when possible.
2. Take smaller bites and chew before the next mouthful.
3. Pause halfway and reassess hunger and fullness.
4. Stop at comfortable satisfaction rather than painful fullness.

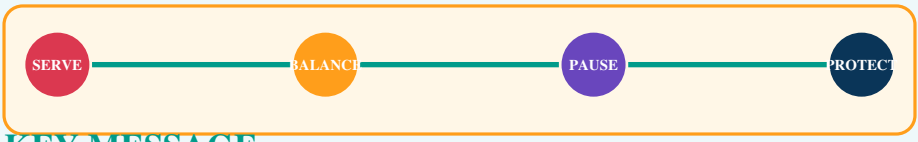
MYTH	Eating slowly matters only for formal meals.
FACT	Attention and pace can support portion awareness in ordinary daily meals.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Sit down and remove screens during meals when possible.
- ☐ Take smaller bites and chew before the next mouthful.
- ☐ Pause halfway and reassess hunger and fullness.
- ☐ Stop at comfortable satisfaction rather than painful fullness.

48. Use Smaller Plates and Sensible Portions

SECTION E: ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



KEY MESSAGE

Shape the serving environment so appropriate portions become easier and automatic.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Large plates, packages and restaurant servings can quietly reset expectations about how much is normal. Using smaller dishes and serving once can reduce mindless excess without banning favourite foods. Portion needs still vary with body size, activity, age, pregnancy and medical conditions.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At home, a family serves vegetables generously, a moderate staple portion and beans or fish on smaller plates, with extra vegetables available if still hungry.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Serve food onto a plate rather than eating from a packet.
2. Use a smaller plate when habitual servings are oversized.
3. Make vegetables prominent and energy-dense foods smaller.
4. Wait before taking a second helping.

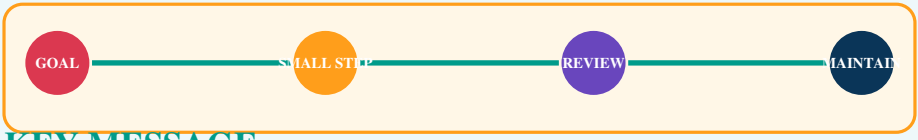
MYTH	Portion control means tiny meals and constant hunger.
FACT	Balanced sensible portions aim for nourishment and comfortable fullness.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Serve food onto a plate rather than eating from a packet.
- ☐ Use a smaller plate when habitual servings are oversized.
- ☐ Make vegetables prominent and energy-dense foods smaller.
- ☐ Wait before taking a second helping.

49. Set Gradual, Realistic Weight-Management Goals

SECTION E: ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



KEY MESSAGE

Choose modest behaviour goals that can be repeated; rapid change is not required for heart benefit.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Even modest sustained weight loss can improve blood pressure, blood sugar and blood fats in people carrying excess weight. Extreme targets often lead to restrictive plans, fatigue and regain. Goals work better when they describe specific behaviours, include a time frame and are reviewed without shame.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Instead of demanding ten kilograms in one month, an adult plans water instead of soda, 30-minute walks five days weekly and a review after four weeks.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose one or two measurable behaviour goals at a time.
2. Aim for gradual progress and include maintenance periods.
3. Record habits as well as weight or waist trends.
4. Treat setbacks as information and restart promptly.

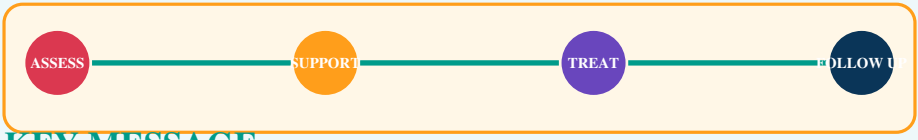
MYTH	Only dramatic weight loss improves heart health.
FACT	Modest sustained change and healthier behaviours can produce meaningful benefits.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose one or two measurable behaviour goals at a time.
- ☐ Aim for gradual progress and include maintenance periods.
- ☐ Record habits as well as weight or waist trends.
- ☐ Treat setbacks as information and restart promptly.

50. Seek Qualified Help for Safe Weight Management

SECTION E: ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT



KEY MESSAGE

Professional support is important when weight change is difficult, rapid, unexplained or complicated by illness or medicines.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Weight is influenced by sleep, medicines, hormones, mental health, food access and medical conditions as well as habits. A qualified clinician or dietitian can assess causes, set safe targets and monitor treatment. Unregulated pills, injections, herbal mixtures and starvation diets may cause serious harm or interact with medicines.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A woman with diabetes and high blood pressure asks her clinic for a coordinated plan rather than buying an advertised slimming mixture with unknown ingredients.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Discuss health conditions, medicines and previous attempts openly.
2. Use a qualified clinician or registered nutrition professional.
3. Ask about benefits, risks, cost and follow-up of any treatment.
4. Avoid unregulated products and promises of effortless rapid loss.

MYTH	Seeking weight-management help shows lack of discipline.
FACT	Qualified support addresses medical factors and improves safety and follow-through.

MY HEALTHY-WEIGHT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Discuss health conditions, medicines and previous attempts openly.
- ☐ Use a qualified clinician or registered nutrition professional.
- ☐ Ask about benefits, risks, cost and follow-up of any treatment.

SECTION E - ILLUSTRATED RECAP

HEALTHY WEIGHT, HEALTHIER HEART



NOURISHMENT, MOVEMENT AND CONSISTENCY

KNOW THE TREND	Use weight, waist and health checks without obsession.
BALANCE	Combine nourishing meals, portions and regular movement.
EAT MINDFULLY	Notice hunger, slow down and stop comfortably satisfied.
GET SUPPORT	Set gradual goals and use qualified help when needed.

HEALTH FIRST - SMALL STEPS - STEADY PROGRESS

SECTION F

CONTROL BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD SUGAR



WAYS 51-60: KNOW YOUR NUMBERS AND FOLLOW THE PLAN

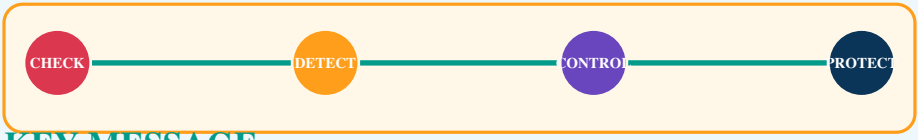
MEASURE WHAT CANNOT BE FELT

High blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol and raised blood sugar can damage arteries without early symptoms. Screening, accurate records, healthy habits, consistent medicine and regular clinical review turn hidden risk into preventable action.

CHECK - RECORD - TREAT - REVIEW

51. Have Your Blood Pressure Checked Regularly

SECTION F: CONTROL BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD SUGAR



KEY MESSAGE

Blood pressure can be dangerously high without symptoms, so measurement is the only reliable way to know.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

High blood pressure damages artery walls and makes the heart work harder. Over time it can cause heart attack, stroke, heart failure, kidney disease and sight problems. A single reading may be affected by stress, pain, caffeine or activity; repeated correctly taken readings give a clearer picture.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

During a community health day, a 48-year-old who feels well has a high reading. Repeat checks at a clinic confirm hypertension before complications develop.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask for a blood-pressure check during routine health visits.
2. Rest quietly before measurement and keep feet supported.
3. Use the correct cuff size on a bare upper arm.
4. Arrange repeat readings when one result is high.

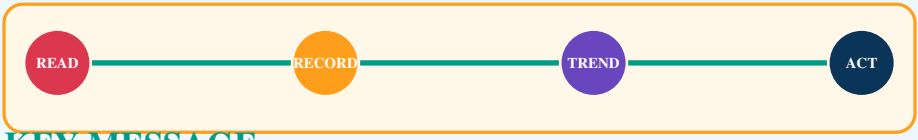
MYTH	If blood pressure is high, a person will always feel a headache.
FACT	Hypertension commonly causes no warning symptoms until damage has occurred.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask for a blood-pressure check during routine health visits.
- ☐ Rest quietly before measurement and keep feet supported.
- ☐ Use the correct cuff size on a bare upper arm.
- ☐ Arrange repeat readings when one result is high.

52. Know and Record Your Blood Pressure Numbers

SECTION F: CONTROL BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD SUGAR



KEY MESSAGE

Keep a clear record of readings, dates, times and circumstances so trends can guide care.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Blood pressure is written as systolic over diastolic pressure. One number shows pressure while the heart contracts; the other shows pressure between beats. Targets differ with age, pregnancy, kidney disease and other conditions. A record helps a clinician distinguish a persistent pattern from an isolated reading.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A patient carries a small card showing clinic and home readings, medicines and symptoms. The clinician can see the pattern instead of relying on memory.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Write both numbers, date, time and measurement place.
2. Use a validated monitor and correct technique for home checks.
3. Bring the record and device to appointments.
4. Ask your clinician to explain your personal target.

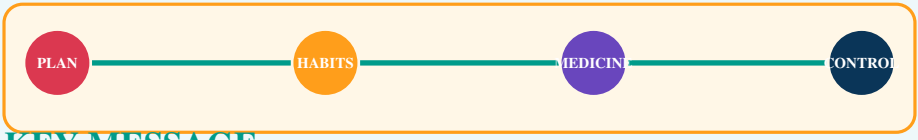
MYTH	Only the top blood-pressure number matters.
FACT	Both systolic and diastolic values provide important information.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Write both numbers, date, time and measurement place.
- ☐ Use a validated monitor and correct technique for home checks.
- ☐ Bring the record and device to appointments.

53. Follow an Agreed Plan to Control Hypertension

SECTION F: CONTROL BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD SUGAR



KEY MESSAGE

Combine lifestyle measures, prescribed treatment and follow-up exactly as agreed with your health professional.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Blood-pressure control often requires several actions: less sodium, regular activity, healthy weight, no tobacco, limited alcohol, good sleep and medicine when prescribed. Because hypertension is usually long-term, a plan must be realistic and reviewed. Feeling well does not mean the pressure is controlled.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A teacher measures salt, walks most days, takes medicine at the same time and attends review with a written pressure record.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

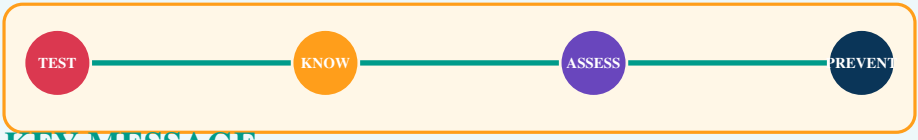
1. Know each part of the plan and why it is needed.
2. Link medicine to a reliable daily routine.
3. Monitor blood pressure as advised.
4. Report side effects instead of silently stopping treatment.

MYTH	Lifestyle changes make prescribed blood-pressure medicine unnecessary for everyone.
FACT	Some people still need medicine; treatment should be adjusted only with clinical advice.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Know each part of the plan and why it is needed.
- ☐ Link medicine to a reliable daily routine.
- ☐ Monitor blood pressure as advised.
- ☐ Report side effects instead of silently stopping treatment.

54. Have Cholesterol and Triglycerides Checked When Advised



KEY MESSAGE

A blood lipid test can reveal risk that cannot be seen or felt.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

LDL cholesterol contributes to plaque in arteries, while high triglycerides may accompany diabetes, excess weight, alcohol use or an unhealthy diet. HDL and other results help complete the picture. Testing frequency depends on age, family history and health conditions, and results should be interpreted with overall cardiovascular risk.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A man with diabetes asks for a lipid test. His high LDL is identified early, allowing food changes, treatment and follow-up before symptoms appear.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask when lipid screening is appropriate for your risk.
2. Follow fasting instructions if the laboratory gives them.
3. Keep a copy of results for comparison.
4. Discuss the complete result, not one number in isolation.

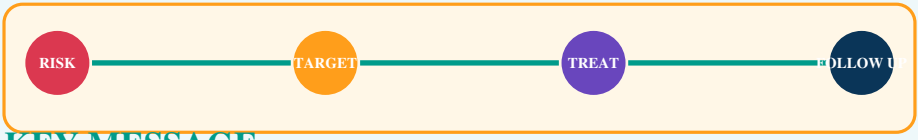
MYTH	High cholesterol always causes a person to feel unwell.
FACT	Abnormal blood lipids are often silent and require testing.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask when lipid screening is appropriate for your risk.
- ☐ Follow fasting instructions if the laboratory gives them.
- ☐ Keep a copy of results for comparison.
- ☐ Discuss the complete result, not one number in isolation.

55. Work with a Clinician to Lower Harmful Cholesterol

SECTION F: CONTROL BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD SUGAR



KEY MESSAGE

Lowering LDL cholesterol may require both sustained lifestyle changes and prescribed medicine.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

The appropriate LDL goal depends on total risk and whether a person already has heart disease, stroke, diabetes or kidney disease. Plant-rich eating, less saturated and trans fat, activity and weight management help. Statins and other medicines can reduce risk for selected patients, but require correct use and review.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After a minor stroke, a patient discusses benefits and possible side effects of cholesterol medicine, continues healthier meals and returns for repeat testing.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

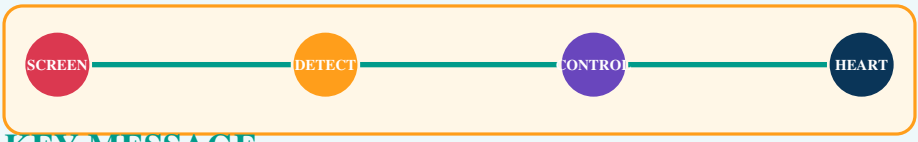
1. Ask how your total cardiovascular risk affects the target.
2. Replace saturated and trans fats with healthier choices.
3. Take prescribed lipid-lowering medicine consistently.
4. Report muscle pain or other suspected effects promptly.

MYTH	A normal-looking body guarantees healthy cholesterol.
FACT	People of any body size can have harmful lipid levels.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask how your total cardiovascular risk affects the target.
- ☐ Replace saturated and trans fats with healthier choices.
- ☐ Take prescribed lipid-lowering medicine consistently.
- ☐ Report muscle pain or other suspected effects promptly.

56. Screen for Diabetes When Recommended



KEY MESSAGE

Early detection of raised blood sugar creates time to prevent damage to the heart, kidneys, nerves and eyes.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Diabetes greatly increases cardiovascular risk and may exist for years before obvious symptoms. Screening may use fasting glucose, HbA1c or another approved test. People with excess weight, family history, high blood pressure, previous gestational diabetes or other risk factors may need earlier or more frequent screening.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A woman with previous diabetes during pregnancy asks for follow-up screening even though she feels well. Raised glucose is found early.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

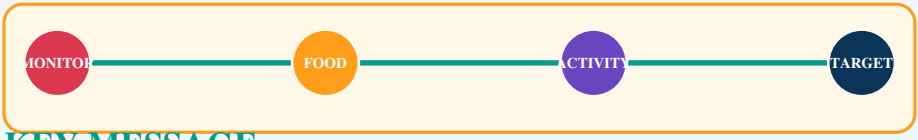
1. Discuss personal risk factors with a health professional.
2. Complete the recommended laboratory test correctly.
3. Return to discuss the result and next steps.
4. Repeat screening at the advised interval.

MYTH	Diabetes testing is needed only after excessive thirst begins.
FACT	Screening can detect abnormal glucose before noticeable symptoms.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Discuss personal risk factors with a health professional.
- ☐ Complete the recommended laboratory test correctly.
- ☐ Return to discuss the result and next steps.
- ☐ Repeat screening at the advised interval.

57. Keep Blood Glucose Within Your Agreed Target Range



KEY MESSAGE

If you have diabetes, follow an individual plan for meals, activity, monitoring and medicine.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Persistently high glucose damages blood vessels and accelerates atherosclerosis. Very low glucose can also be dangerous, especially with insulin or certain tablets. Targets should be personalised according to age, medicines, pregnancy, other illness and risk of hypoglycaemia. Control is more than avoiding sugar alone.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A patient checks glucose as instructed, carries treatment for low sugar, plans balanced meals, walks regularly and reviews HbA1c with the clinic.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

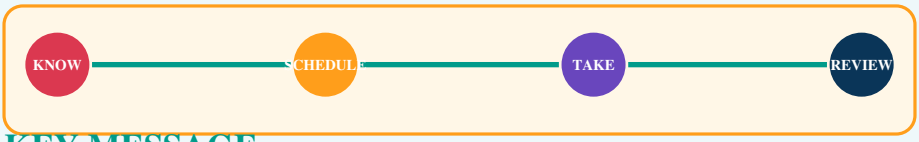
1. Know your glucose and HbA1c targets.
2. Take medicine and monitor at the agreed times.
3. Learn signs and treatment of low blood sugar.
4. Bring records to appointments for safe adjustment.

MYTH	People with diabetes only need to stop adding sugar to tea.
FACT	Overall food pattern, portions, activity, monitoring and medicines all matter.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Know your glucose and HbA1c targets.
- ☐ Take medicine and monitor at the agreed times.
- ☐ Learn signs and treatment of low blood sugar.
- ☐ Bring records to appointments for safe adjustment.

58. Take Prescribed Medicines Consistently



KEY MESSAGE

Heart-protective medicines work best when taken at the correct dose and time, not only when symptoms appear.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Medicines for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and clot prevention often reduce risk quietly. Missed doses can allow risk factors to rise, while doubling a forgotten dose may be unsafe. Cost, side effects, beliefs and complex schedules can interfere with adherence; these problems should be discussed openly.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A patient uses a weekly pill box, phone reminder and medicine list. When costs rise, he speaks to the clinic about safe alternatives instead of skipping doses.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

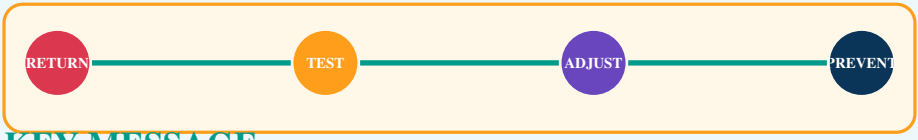
1. Know the name, purpose, dose and time of each medicine.
2. Use reminders, a chart or pill organiser.
3. Ask what to do after a missed dose.
4. Discuss cost or side effects before changing treatment.

MYTH	Medicine is needed only on days when symptoms are present.
FACT	Many cardiovascular medicines prevent silent risk and must be taken consistently.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Know the name, purpose, dose and time of each medicine.
- ☐ Use reminders, a chart or pill organiser.
- ☐ Ask what to do after a missed dose.
- ☐ Discuss cost or side effects before changing treatment.

59. Attend Follow-Up Appointments and Laboratory Tests



KEY MESSAGE

Follow-up confirms whether treatment is working and whether it remains safe.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol can change without symptoms. Some medicines require kidney, liver, electrolyte or other monitoring. Follow-up also allows dose adjustment, side-effect review, vaccination advice and reinforcement of healthy habits. Missing visits can leave poor control or complications unnoticed.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A patient brings readings, laboratory results, all medicine packets and written questions to each review, making the short consultation more useful.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Record appointment and test dates immediately.
2. Complete requested tests at the recommended time.
3. Bring medicines, records and questions to review.
4. Reschedule promptly if an appointment is missed.

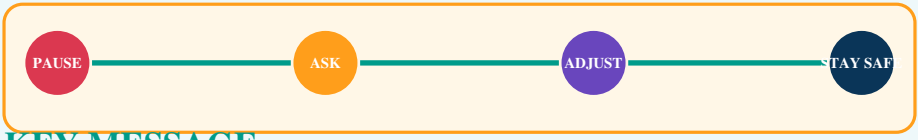
MYTH	Follow-up is unnecessary when the first prescription seems to work.
FACT	Regular review checks effectiveness, safety and changing health needs.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Record appointment and test dates immediately.
- ☐ Complete requested tests at the recommended time.
- ☐ Bring medicines, records and questions to review.
- ☐ Reschedule promptly if an appointment is missed.

60. Never Stop Heart or Blood-Pressure Medicine Without Advice

SECTION F: CONTROL BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD SUGAR



KEY MESSAGE

Do not stop, share or change cardiovascular medicine on your own, even when readings improve.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Improved numbers may show that treatment is working, not that the condition has disappeared. Abruptly stopping some medicines can cause rebound high blood pressure, rapid heart rate, chest pain or other harm. Side effects deserve urgent discussion, but the safer response is professional assessment and a supervised change.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After normal readings, a patient considers stopping tablets. She phones the clinic, where the plan is reviewed and one dose is adjusted safely.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Contact the prescriber before stopping or reducing a dose.
2. Explain side effects clearly and when they began.
3. Seek urgent care for severe reactions or alarming symptoms.
4. Never use another person's prescription or share your own.

MYTH	Normal readings mean medicine has permanently cured hypertension.
FACT	Control often depends on continuing treatment and healthy habits.

MY RISK-CONTROL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Contact the prescriber before stopping or reducing a dose.
- ☐ Explain side effects clearly and when they began.
- ☐ Seek urgent care for severe reactions or alarming symptoms.
- ☐ Never use another person's prescription or share your own.

KNOW, CONTROL AND REVIEW YOUR NUMBERS



PREVENTION INCLUDES CLINICAL FOLLOW-UP

BLOOD PRESSURE	Check correctly, record both numbers and follow the plan.
LIPIDS	Test when advised and lower harmful cholesterol.
BLOOD SUGAR	Screen for diabetes and stay within agreed targets.
MEDICINES	Take consistently, attend review and never stop alone.

CHECK - RECORD - TAKE MEDICINE - RETURN FOR REVIEW

SECTION G

PROTECT SLEEP, MENTAL WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL HEALTH



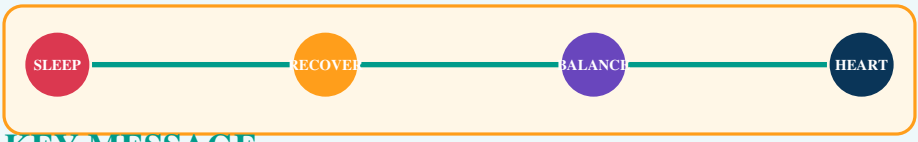
WAYS 61-70: REST, CONNECT AND COPE SAFELY

A CALMER LIFE SUPPORTS THE HEART

Sleep, stress, emotional health, alcohol use and social connection all influence blood pressure, heart rhythm and daily choices. This section builds practical habits for recovery, supportive relationships and timely professional help.

SLEEP WELL - COPE SAFELY - STAY CONNECTED

61. Aim for Regular, Sufficient Sleep



KEY MESSAGE

Protect enough sleep as a daily health need, not a luxury left until every other task is complete.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Habitually short or poor-quality sleep is linked with higher blood pressure, weight gain, disturbed blood sugar, inflammation and unhealthy food choices. Adults differ, but many function best with about seven to nine hours. Quality matters too: repeated waking, breathing pauses or severe daytime sleepiness reduce recovery.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A teacher counts backward from the morning alarm and protects a regular bedtime instead of marking work deep into the night every day.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

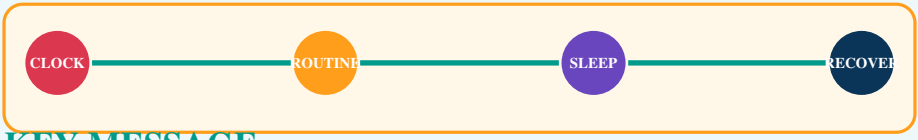
1. Set a realistic sleep window that allows sufficient hours.
2. Make the room dark, quiet, comfortable and secure.
3. Reduce late caffeine, heavy meals and stimulating screens.
4. Seek care when poor sleep continues despite good habits.

MYTH	Sleeping less is proof that a person is hardworking and healthy.
FACT	Regular insufficient sleep can quietly increase cardiovascular risk.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Set a realistic sleep window that allows sufficient hours.
- ☐ Make the room dark, quiet, comfortable and secure.
- ☐ Reduce late caffeine, heavy meals and stimulating screens.
- ☐ Seek care when poor sleep continues despite good habits.

62. Keep a Consistent Bedtime and Waking Time



KEY MESSAGE

A stable sleep schedule helps the body clock produce more predictable sleep and daytime alertness.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Large daily changes in bedtime and waking time can disturb circadian rhythms, delay sleep and make mornings difficult. Consistency strengthens cues for sleep, appetite and hormone regulation. Some shift workers cannot keep identical times, but can still create the most stable routine possible and protect a dark recovery period.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A student chooses a bedtime and waking time that vary by less than an hour, including most weekends, and prepares school items earlier.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose bed and wake times that fit essential responsibilities.
2. Keep weekend changes modest when possible.
3. Use morning daylight and daytime activity to reinforce the body clock.
4. Create the same calm wind-down routine each evening.

MYTH	Weekend sleeping at any time completely repairs weekday sleep loss.
FACT	Extra rest may help, but a consistent schedule usually supports better sleep quality.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose bed and wake times that fit essential responsibilities.
- ☐ Keep weekend changes modest when possible.
- ☐ Use morning daylight and daytime activity to reinforce the body clock.

63. Seek Help for Loud Snoring or Possible Sleep Apnoea

SECTION G: PROTECT SLEEP, MENTAL WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL HEALTH



KEY MESSAGE

Loud snoring with breathing pauses, gasping or severe daytime sleepiness deserves medical assessment.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Obstructive sleep apnoea repeatedly blocks airflow during sleep, lowering oxygen and activating stress responses. Untreated, it is associated with high blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythms, stroke and heart disease. Not everyone who snores has apnoea, but witnessed pauses and daytime symptoms are important warnings.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A spouse notices repeated silence followed by gasping at night. The affected person records the symptoms and seeks a clinic assessment rather than dismissing them.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

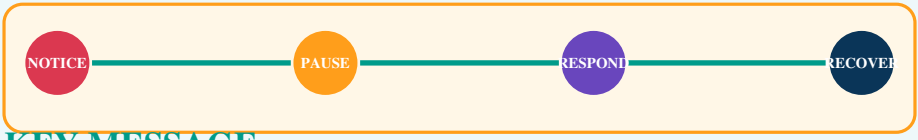
1. Ask a bed partner about snoring, pauses or gasping.
2. Report morning headaches and daytime sleepiness.
3. Avoid driving when dangerously sleepy.
4. Complete recommended sleep testing and treatment follow-up.

MYTH	Loud snoring is always harmless and only disturbs other people.
FACT	Snoring with breathing pauses may signal a treatable cardiovascular risk.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask a bed partner about snoring, pauses or gasping.
- ☐ Report morning headaches and daytime sleepiness.
- ☐ Avoid driving when dangerously sleepy.
- ☐ Complete recommended sleep testing and treatment follow-up.

64. Use Healthy Methods to Manage Daily Stress



KEY MESSAGE

Stress cannot always be removed, but the response can be planned and practised.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

During stress, the body releases hormones that temporarily raise heart rate and blood pressure. Persistent stress can also disrupt sleep, activity, food choices and medicine routines. Healthy coping includes problem-solving, movement, breathing, social support and realistic boundaries. It does not mean pretending difficulties are absent.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A business owner lists urgent and non-urgent tasks, takes a short walk after work and discusses financial worries with a trusted adviser.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

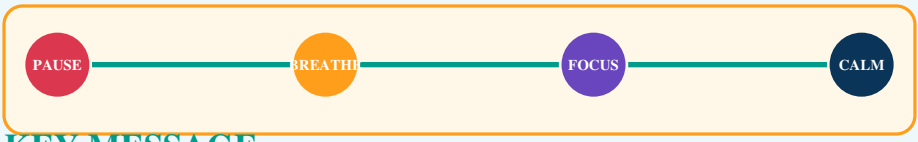
1. Identify common triggers and early body signs of stress.
2. Separate problems you can act on from those you cannot control.
3. Use movement, slow breathing and supportive conversation.
4. Schedule breaks before exhaustion develops.

MYTH	Strong people should handle all stress silently and alone.
FACT	Seeking support and using coping skills are signs of responsible self-care.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Identify common triggers and early body signs of stress.
- ☐ Separate problems you can act on from those you cannot control.
- ☐ Use movement, slow breathing and supportive conversation.
- ☐ Schedule breaks before exhaustion develops.

65. Practise Relaxation, Prayer or Mindfulness



KEY MESSAGE

Use a regular calming practice that fits your beliefs, culture and health needs.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Slow breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, prayer and mindfulness can reduce tension and interrupt repeated stress reactions. They may support sleep, emotional regulation and healthy decisions. These practices complement medical and psychological care; they should not replace urgent treatment for severe symptoms.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Before bed, a family spends ten quiet minutes in prayer and slow breathing, with phones put aside and lights lowered.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

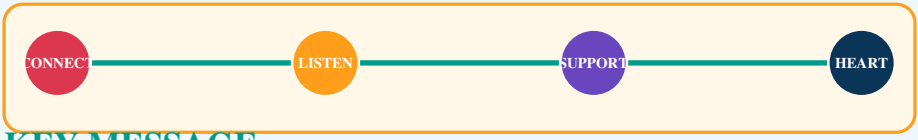
1. Choose one practice that feels meaningful and safe.
2. Begin with five to ten minutes at a regular time.
3. Relax the shoulders and slow the exhalation gently.
4. Continue prescribed care and seek help for persistent distress.

MYTH	Relaxation works only after stress has already disappeared.
FACT	Regular practice can train a calmer response even during difficult periods.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose one practice that feels meaningful and safe.
- ☐ Begin with five to ten minutes at a regular time.
- ☐ Relax the shoulders and slow the exhalation gently.
- ☐ Continue prescribed care and seek help for persistent distress.

66. Maintain Supportive Family and Social Connections



KEY MESSAGE

Reliable relationships can protect emotional health and make healthy routines easier to sustain.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Loneliness and social isolation are associated with poorer cardiovascular health. Supportive people can encourage clinic attendance, medicine use, activity, healthy meals and early help-seeking. Quality matters more than the number of contacts: relationships should be respectful, safe and reciprocal.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Neighbours form a walking group and check on an older member who lives alone, while family members share clinic transport and meal preparation.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

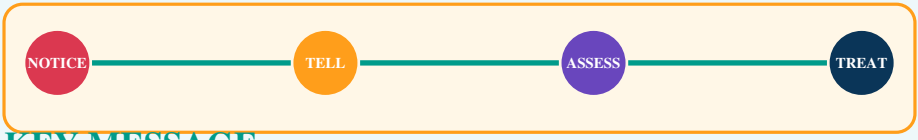
1. Contact at least one trusted person regularly.
2. Listen without immediately judging or giving orders.
3. Join a safe faith, community, sport or interest group.
4. Seek protection and professional help in abusive relationships.

MYTH	Social connection matters only for mood, not physical health.
FACT	Supportive relationships can influence habits, recovery and cardiovascular wellbeing.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Contact at least one trusted person regularly.
- ☐ Listen without immediately judging or giving orders.
- ☐ Join a safe faith, community, sport or interest group.
- ☐ Seek protection and professional help in abusive relationships.

67. Seek Professional Help for Persistent Depression or Anxiety



KEY MESSAGE

Persistent sadness, loss of interest, fear or worry deserves qualified assessment and compassionate care.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Depression and anxiety can disturb sleep, appetite, activity and adherence to heart treatment. They may also increase harmful coping and make physical symptoms feel overwhelming. Effective care may include counselling, social support and medicine. Thoughts of self-harm or suicide require urgent assistance and should never be kept secret.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After weeks of poor sleep, hopelessness and withdrawal, a health worker speaks to a clinician and trusted relative rather than continuing alone.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

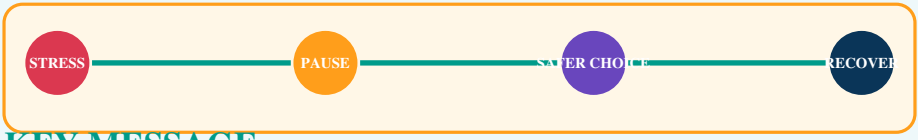
1. Notice symptoms lasting most days for two weeks or longer.
2. Tell a trusted person and contact a qualified professional.
3. Continue treatment long enough for proper review.
4. Seek urgent help for self-harm thoughts or inability to stay safe.

MYTH	Depression is laziness that should be overcome by willpower.
FACT	Depression is a real health condition that can be assessed and treated.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Notice symptoms lasting most days for two weeks or longer.
- ☐ Tell a trusted person and contact a qualified professional.
- ☐ Continue treatment long enough for proper review.

68. Avoid Using Tobacco or Alcohol to Cope with Stress



KEY MESSAGE

Tobacco and alcohol may briefly change feelings but can worsen long-term cardiovascular and mental health.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Nicotine raises heart rate and blood pressure and reinforces dependence. Alcohol can disturb sleep, lower judgement, interact with medicines and increase blood pressure; repeated use may lead to dependence. When the effect wears off, the original problem remains and anxiety or low mood may worsen.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After a difficult day, a driver chooses a walk, meal, shower and conversation with a friend instead of cigarettes or drinking alone.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

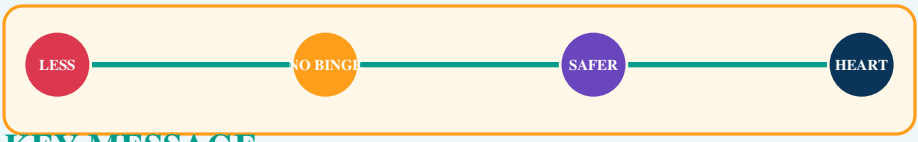
1. Identify situations that trigger smoking or drinking.
2. Prepare a specific non-substance coping response.
3. Avoid keeping tobacco or excess alcohol at home.
4. Seek professional help when cravings or dependence are strong.

MYTH	Smoking or drinking is necessary to relax after a stressful day.
FACT	The short effect can hide dependence, poorer sleep and increased heart risk.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Identify situations that trigger smoking or drinking.
- ☐ Prepare a specific non-substance coping response.
- ☐ Avoid keeping tobacco or excess alcohol at home.
- ☐ Seek professional help when cravings or dependence are strong.

69. Limit Alcohol and Avoid Binge Drinking



KEY MESSAGE

For heart protection, less alcohol is better; people who do not drink should not start for supposed health benefits.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Alcohol can raise blood pressure and triglycerides, disturb heart rhythm, add energy and contribute to liver disease, injuries and some cancers. Binge drinking is especially dangerous and can trigger irregular heartbeat, stroke or poor decisions. Some people should avoid alcohol completely because of pregnancy, medicines, illness, driving or dependence.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At a celebration, a guest chooses a non-alcoholic drink, eats normally, refuses drinking games and arranges safe transport.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Set a low limit before an event and avoid rounds or drinking games.
2. Alternate with water and never drink on an empty stomach.
3. Do not drink before driving, operating machinery or taking interacting medicine.
4. Seek help if cutting down is difficult.

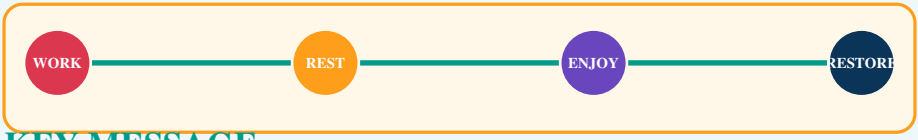
MYTH	Red wine should be started as medicine for the heart.
FACT	No one needs to begin drinking alcohol to prevent heart disease.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Set a low limit before an event and avoid rounds or drinking games.
- ☐ Alternate with water and never drink on an empty stomach.
- ☐ Do not drink before driving, operating machinery or taking interacting medicine.

70. Build Time for Rest, Recreation and Recovery

SECTION G: PROTECT SLEEP, MENTAL WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL HEALTH



KEY MESSAGE

Plan restorative time so work, care duties and exercise do not become continuous strain.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Recovery supports sleep, mood, concentration and the ability to maintain healthy behaviour. Rest is not necessarily inactivity all day: it may include quiet time, music, worship, gentle movement, hobbies or time in nature. Recreation should refresh rather than create new financial, safety or substance-related stress.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A parent protects one evening for family games and a weekend hour for gardening, while leaving room for adequate sleep.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Schedule short daily pauses and regular enjoyable recreation.
2. Choose low-cost activities that genuinely restore energy.
3. Protect at least part of the week from avoidable work demands.
4. Balance vigorous exercise with easier recovery days.

MYTH	Rest must be earned only after complete exhaustion.
FACT	Planned recovery helps prevent exhaustion and supports long-term heart-healthy habits.

MY WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Schedule short daily pauses and regular enjoyable recreation.
- ☐ Choose low-cost activities that genuinely restore energy.
- ☐ Protect at least part of the week from avoidable work demands.
- ☐ Balance vigorous exercise with easier recovery days.

REST, CONNECT AND RECOVER



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH MATTER

SLEEP	Protect sufficient, regular sleep and assess warning signs.
MANAGE STRESS	Use breathing, prayer, mindfulness and problem-solving.
CONNECT	Build safe, supportive family and social relationships.
COPE SAFELY	Limit alcohol, avoid tobacco and seek help early.

SLEEP - CALM - CONNECTION - RECOVERY

SECTION H

USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



WAYS 71-80: ASK, RECORD, REVIEW AND PREVENT

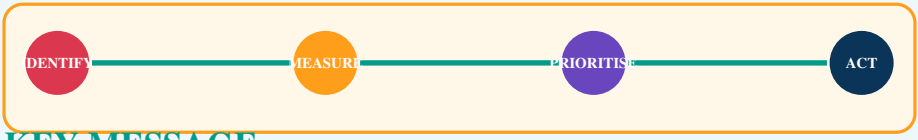
PARTNERSHIP MAKES CARE SAFER

Wise health-service use means knowing personal risk, keeping accurate records, understanding medicines, reporting side effects, avoiding unproven products and attending preventive reviews. Clear questions and shared decisions protect the heart.

ASK CLEARLY - KEEP RECORDS - RETURN FOR REVIEW

71. Know Your Personal Cardiovascular Risk Factors

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

Know which changeable and non-changeable factors shape your own heart and stroke risk.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Risk is influenced by blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, tobacco, weight, activity, food, sleep, age, sex, kidney disease and family history. Factors combine: several moderate risks may become important together. A clinician can use measurements and history to estimate overall risk and decide what deserves priority.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At a routine review, a 52-year-old lists smoking history, family history and medicines, then has blood pressure, weight and recommended blood tests checked.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Write down known conditions, medicines and family history.
2. Check blood pressure and recommended laboratory values.
3. Ask which two risks deserve attention first.
4. Review the risk profile when health or treatment changes.

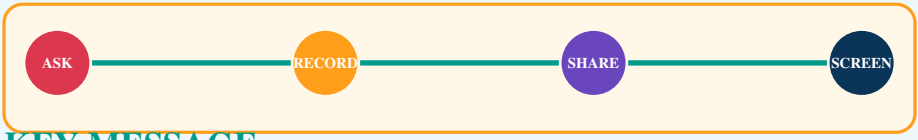
MYTH	One normal test proves that the whole cardiovascular system is safe.
FACT	Overall risk comes from several factors considered together.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Write down known conditions, medicines and family history.
- ☐ Check blood pressure and recommended laboratory values.
- ☐ Ask which two risks deserve attention first.
- ☐ Review the risk profile when health or treatment changes.

72. Discuss Family History of Early Heart Disease with a Clinician

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

Early heart attack, stroke or sudden death in close relatives can justify earlier or more focused assessment.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Families share genes, environments and habits. A parent or sibling affected unusually young may signal inherited high cholesterol or another condition. Family history does not guarantee disease, and it cannot be changed, but it can guide screening and strengthen the case for controlling modifiable risks.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A woman tells her clinician that her father had a heart attack at 48 and her older sister takes cholesterol medicine, leading to timely lipid testing.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask relatives about diagnoses and approximate ages.
2. Record heart attack, stroke, sudden death and known high cholesterol.
3. Share information about parents, siblings and children.
4. Update the record when new family events occur.

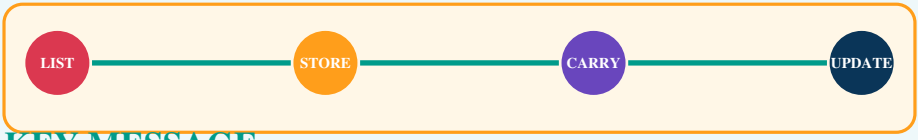
MYTH	Family history means heart disease is unavoidable.
FACT	It raises awareness; healthy habits and appropriate care can still reduce risk.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask relatives about diagnoses and approximate ages.
- ☐ Record heart attack, stroke, sudden death and known high cholesterol.

73. Keep a Personal Record of Medicines and Test Results

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

An accurate portable record helps every health professional make safer decisions.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

People may receive care from several clinics, pharmacies or hospitals. A current medicine list reduces duplication, dangerous interactions and confusion about doses. Keeping blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, kidney results, allergies and major diagnoses together also makes trends easier to review, especially during emergencies.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A patient keeps a paper card in a wallet and a phone photograph showing medicine names, doses, allergies, clinic contacts and recent test results.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Record the generic or brand name, dose and timing.
2. Include allergies and previous serious medicine reactions.
3. Add the date and value of important tests.
4. Update the record after every prescription change.

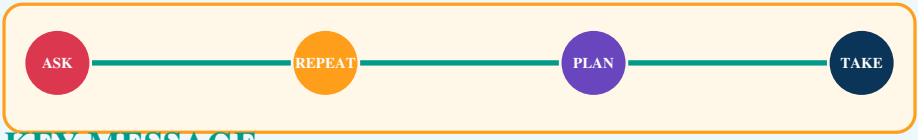
MYTH	Health workers can always see every prescription from another facility.
FACT	Records may not be linked, so a personal list is an important safety tool.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Record the generic or brand name, dose and timing.
- ☐ Include allergies and previous serious medicine reactions.
- ☐ Add the date and value of important tests.
- ☐ Update the record after every prescription change.

74. Ask How Prescribed Medicines Should Be Taken

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

Before leaving the clinic or pharmacy, understand the purpose, dose, timing and special instructions for each medicine.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Terms such as once daily, with food, on an empty stomach or as needed can be misunderstood. Some tablets should not be split or crushed, and some foods, alcohol, herbs or medicines may interact. Clear instructions improve benefit and reduce avoidable side effects. Asking questions is responsible, not disrespectful.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A patient repeats the instructions in his own words and asks whether the tablet is taken in the morning, with food, and what to do if a dose is missed.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask what the medicine treats and how soon it works.
2. Confirm dose, timing, duration and food instructions.
3. Ask about missed doses, driving and important interactions.
4. Request written instructions in clear language.

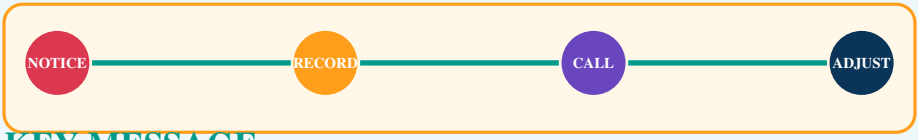
MYTH	The colour and shape of a tablet are enough to identify it safely.
FACT	Appearance can change between manufacturers; use the name and label.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask what the medicine treats and how soon it works.
- ☐ Confirm dose, timing, duration and food instructions.
- ☐ Ask about missed doses, driving and important interactions.
- ☐ Request written instructions in clear language.

75. Report Medicine Side Effects Instead of Stopping Treatment

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

Side effects deserve prompt assessment; sudden unsupervised stopping may create a greater danger.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Some symptoms are mild and temporary, while others need dose adjustment, a different medicine or urgent care. Heart and blood-pressure medicines may cause rebound problems if stopped abruptly. A clinician needs the symptom, timing, dose and other products used to judge whether the medicine is responsible.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After dizziness begins, a patient records when it occurs and contacts the clinic. The clinician checks blood pressure and safely changes the dose.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Note the symptom, timing and medicine dose.
2. Contact the prescriber or pharmacist promptly.
3. Seek urgent care for swelling, breathing difficulty or collapse.
4. Do not double, share or stop doses without guidance.

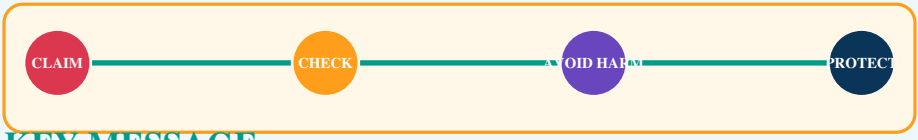
MYTH	Every unwanted symptom proves an allergy and requires immediate permanent stopping.
FACT	Symptoms need assessment; the safest response depends on severity and cause.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Note the symptom, timing and medicine dose.
- ☐ Contact the prescriber or pharmacist promptly.
- ☐ Seek urgent care for swelling, breathing difficulty or collapse.
- ☐ Do not double, share or stop doses without guidance.

76. Avoid Unproven Herbal Mixtures and Detox Products

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

Natural does not automatically mean safe, effective, pure or compatible with heart medicines.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Unregulated mixtures may contain unknown ingredients, variable doses, contamination or hidden prescription drugs. Some raise blood pressure, damage the liver or kidneys, affect heart rhythm or alter clotting. “Detox” claims often lack good evidence because the liver and kidneys already remove waste.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A man taking blood thinners is offered a secret herbal cleanse. He shows the product to his clinician and does not combine it with treatment.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask for the exact ingredient list and evidence.
2. Tell clinicians about every herb, powder and tea used.
3. Avoid products with secret formulas or guaranteed cures.
4. Report suspected harm to a qualified health professional.

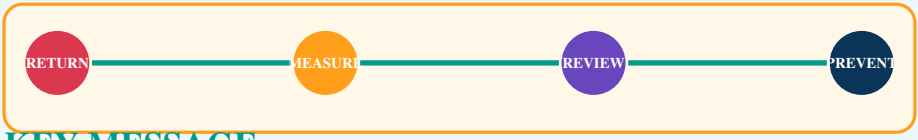
MYTH	A product is harmless because it is sold as traditional or natural.
FACT	Natural products can cause toxicity and serious medicine interactions.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- [ ] Ask for the exact ingredient list and evidence.
- [ ] Tell clinicians about every herb, powder and tea used.
- [ ] Avoid products with secret formulas or guaranteed cures.
- [ ] Report suspected harm to a qualified health professional.

77. Attend Routine Medical Reviews Even When Feeling Well

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

Preventive review is valuable precisely because major risk factors may be silent.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, kidney disease and medicine side effects may progress without obvious symptoms. Routine appointments allow measurement, examination, laboratory monitoring, vaccination review and adjustment of treatment. They also create time to discuss new family history, lifestyle barriers or symptoms.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A market trader attends a scheduled review despite feeling normal; raised blood pressure is found and controlled before complications occur.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Record the next review date before leaving the clinic.
2. Complete requested tests at the recommended time.
3. Bring medicines, records and written questions.
4. Reschedule promptly when a visit is missed.

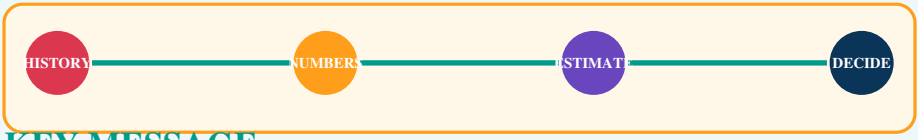
MYTH	Medical review is necessary only when pain or illness appears.
FACT	Preventive care detects silent risk and checks treatment safety.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Record the next review date before leaving the clinic.
- ☐ Complete requested tests at the recommended time.
- ☐ Bring medicines, records and written questions.
- ☐ Reschedule promptly when a visit is missed.

78. Ask Whether a Cardiovascular Risk Assessment Is Appropriate

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

A formal risk assessment can help match the intensity of prevention to the likelihood of heart attack or stroke.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Risk tools combine factors such as age, sex, blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking and diabetes to estimate future risk. They support shared decisions about medicines and lifestyle priorities, but do not replace clinical judgement. Some people already have high-risk conditions and need treatment without relying only on a calculator.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

An adult with several borderline results asks the clinician to explain overall risk and how each proposed treatment might reduce it.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask whether a validated assessment suits your age and condition.
2. Provide accurate smoking, medicine and medical history.
3. Discuss what the estimate means and its limitations.
4. Agree on actions and a date to reassess.

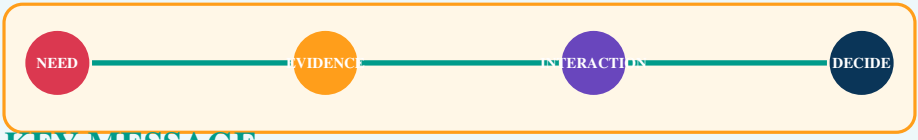
MYTH	A risk score predicts exactly whether and when a heart attack will happen.
FACT	It estimates probability for groups and guides prevention; it is not a personal prophecy.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask whether a validated assessment suits your age and condition.
- ☐ Provide accurate smoking, medicine and medical history.
- ☐ Discuss what the estimate means and its limitations.
- ☐ Agree on actions and a date to reassess.

79. Follow Professional Advice Before Using Supplements

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

Use vitamins, minerals and other supplements only for a clear reason and with advice that considers your medicines and conditions.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Supplements are not a substitute for vegetables, fruit, pulses, whole grains, activity or prescribed care. High doses can cause bleeding, abnormal heart rhythm, liver or kidney injury and medicine interactions. A deficiency, pregnancy or specific illness may justify supplementation, but the product and dose should match the need.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Before buying potassium tablets for blood pressure, a patient with kidney disease asks the clinic and learns that excess potassium could be dangerous.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask what problem the supplement is meant to correct.
2. Check the dose, duration and reliable product source.
3. Review interactions with medicines and kidney or liver disease.
4. Stop and seek advice if unexpected symptoms occur.

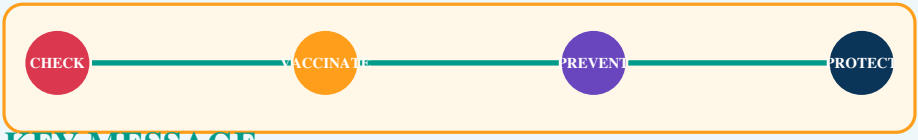
MYTH	More vitamins always produce more heart protection.
FACT	Excess doses can be ineffective or harmful; need and dose matter.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask what problem the supplement is meant to correct.
- ☐ Check the dose, duration and reliable product source.
- ☐ Review interactions with medicines and kidney or liver disease.
- ☐ Stop and seek advice if unexpected symptoms occur.

80. Keep Recommended Vaccinations Up to Date

SECTION H: USE HEALTH SERVICES WISELY



KEY MESSAGE

Vaccination can reduce infections that place extra strain on the heart and circulation.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Influenza, pneumonia, COVID-19 and other infections can worsen heart failure, trigger inflammation or increase the risk of cardiovascular complications. Recommendations depend on age, pregnancy, occupation, travel and conditions such as heart, lung, kidney disease or diabetes. Vaccines do not replace healthy habits or regular care.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

An older adult with heart disease brings a vaccination card to clinic and receives the vaccines recommended for age and condition.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Keep a written or digital vaccination record.
2. Ask which vaccines suit your age and medical conditions.
3. Plan ahead for travel, pregnancy or seasonal outbreaks.
4. Report previous severe reactions before vaccination.

MYTH	Vaccines are only important for children.
FACT	Adults may need routine, seasonal and risk-based vaccination throughout life.

MY SAFE-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Keep a written or digital vaccination record.
- ☐ Ask which vaccines suit your age and medical conditions.
- ☐ Plan ahead for travel, pregnancy or seasonal outbreaks.
- ☐ Report previous severe reactions before vaccination.

BECOME AN INFORMED PARTNER IN CARE



FAMILY SUPPORT CAN STRENGTHEN SAFE CARE

KNOW RISK	Share family history and request appropriate assessment.
KEEP RECORDS	Carry medicines, allergies, tests and vaccination history.
ASK QUESTIONS	Understand every prescription and report side effects.
REVIEW	Attend preventive care and avoid unproven products.

INFORMED QUESTIONS - ACCURATE RECORDS - SAFER CARE

SECTION I

ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



WAYS 81-90: PROTECT EVERY AGE AND CONDITION

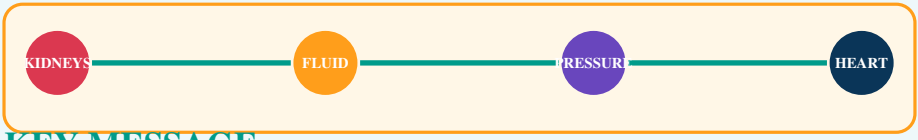
PREVENTION MUST FIT THE PERSON

Kidney disease, diabetes, pregnancy, menopause, childhood exposures, polluted air and existing heart conditions require tailored prevention. This section explains when routine advice must be combined with specialised monitoring and continuing care.

EARLY CARE - INDIVIDUAL ADVICE - LIFELONG FOLLOW-UP

81. Manage Kidney Disease to Reduce Cardiovascular Strain

SECTION I: ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



KEY MESSAGE

Kidney and heart health are closely connected; protecting one helps protect the other.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Damaged kidneys may retain salt and fluid, raise blood pressure and disturb minerals and hormones. Heart disease can also reduce kidney blood flow. People with kidney disease often need individual advice about sodium, fluids, potassium, protein and medicines, because general recommendations may not be safe at every stage.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A patient with chronic kidney disease attends blood-pressure and kidney-function reviews and asks before using painkillers or herbal products.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Attend kidney-function, urine and blood-pressure checks.
2. Take prescribed medicines and report side effects.
3. Follow individual advice on salt, fluids and potassium.
4. Avoid unapproved herbs and frequent anti-inflammatory painkillers.

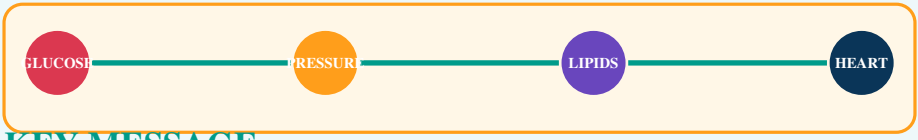
MYTH	Kidney disease affects only urine and has nothing to do with the heart.
FACT	Kidney disease substantially increases cardiovascular risk.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Attend kidney-function, urine and blood-pressure checks.
- ☐ Take prescribed medicines and report side effects.
- ☐ Follow individual advice on salt, fluids and potassium.
- ☐ Avoid unapproved herbs and frequent anti-inflammatory painkillers.

82. Control Heart Risk Factors When Living with Diabetes

SECTION I: ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



KEY MESSAGE

Diabetes care must address blood pressure, cholesterol, tobacco, kidneys and activity as well as glucose.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Diabetes damages blood vessels and increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney disease and circulation problems. Good glucose control matters, but comprehensive care gives stronger protection. Targets should be individualised, especially for older adults, pregnancy, kidney disease or people at risk of low blood sugar.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

At review, a patient checks HbA1c, blood pressure, cholesterol, kidneys, feet and medicines, then agrees on food and activity goals.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Know your agreed glucose, blood-pressure and lipid targets.
2. Take medicines consistently and monitor as advised.
3. Avoid tobacco and remain physically active.
4. Attend kidney, eye and foot screening.

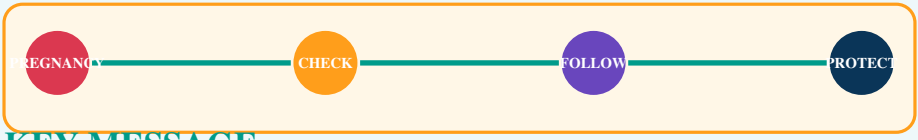
MYTH	Diabetes heart risk disappears when one glucose reading is normal.
FACT	Long-term control of several risk factors is required.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Know your agreed glucose, blood-pressure and lipid targets.
- ☐ Take medicines consistently and monitor as advised.
- ☐ Avoid tobacco and remain physically active.
- ☐ Attend kidney, eye and foot screening.

83. Seek Cardiovascular Care During and After Pregnancy When Advised

SECTION I: ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



KEY MESSAGE

Pregnancy can reveal or increase cardiovascular risk, so warning signs and recommended follow-up matter.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Pregnancy increases blood volume and workload on the heart. High blood pressure, diabetes, blood clots and rare heart-muscle weakness may occur during pregnancy or after delivery. Severe headache, chest pain, fainting, marked breathlessness, one-sided leg swelling or sudden swelling need urgent assessment.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A pregnant woman with previous hypertension attends antenatal reviews, brings her medicine list and seeks urgent care for new severe breathlessness.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Attend antenatal and postnatal appointments.
2. Tell clinicians about heart, kidney and pregnancy history.
3. Use only medicines confirmed safe in pregnancy.
4. Seek urgent care for severe warning symptoms.

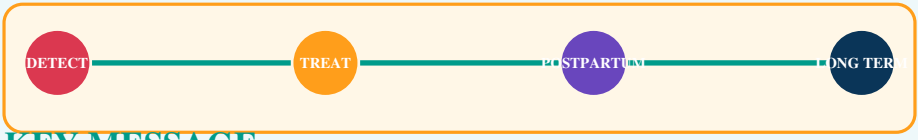
MYTH	Heart-related pregnancy problems end immediately after delivery.
FACT	Some complications arise or persist in the weeks after birth.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Attend antenatal and postnatal appointments.
- ☐ Tell clinicians about heart, kidney and pregnancy history.
- ☐ Use only medicines confirmed safe in pregnancy.
- ☐ Seek urgent care for severe warning symptoms.

84. Follow Up High Blood Pressure That Begins in Pregnancy

SECTION I: ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



KEY MESSAGE

Pregnancy-related hypertension needs care during pregnancy and continued review after birth.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia can threaten the mother and baby. Blood pressure may remain high or worsen after delivery, and a history of these conditions raises future cardiovascular risk. Follow-up should include blood-pressure checks, medicine review and long-term prevention.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

After pre-eclampsia, a mother has blood pressure checked soon after discharge and again at the scheduled postnatal and long-term reviews.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

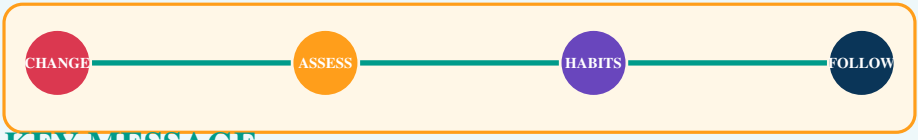
1. Know the planned blood-pressure review dates.
2. Take prescribed medicine exactly as directed.
3. Seek urgent care for severe headache, visual changes or breathlessness.
4. Tell future clinicians about the pregnancy history.

MYTH	Normal pressure at one postnatal visit erases all future risk.
FACT	A history of pregnancy hypertension remains important for lifelong prevention.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Know the planned blood-pressure review dates.
- ☐ Take prescribed medicine exactly as directed.
- ☐ Seek urgent care for severe headache, visual changes or breathlessness.

85. Review Heart Risk During and After Menopause



KEY MESSAGE

Menopause is a useful time to review blood pressure, cholesterol, weight, glucose and daily habits.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Ageing and hormonal changes can alter body fat distribution, cholesterol, sleep and blood pressure. Menopause itself does not make heart disease inevitable, but risk may rise as several factors accumulate. Treatment decisions, including hormone therapy, should consider symptoms, timing, medical history and clot risk.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A woman with hot flushes and increasing waist size asks for a full risk review rather than buying hormones or supplements without assessment.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Check blood pressure and recommended blood tests.
2. Maintain strength, aerobic activity and nourishing meals.
3. Discuss sleep and persistent symptoms with a clinician.
4. Review benefits and risks before using hormone therapy.

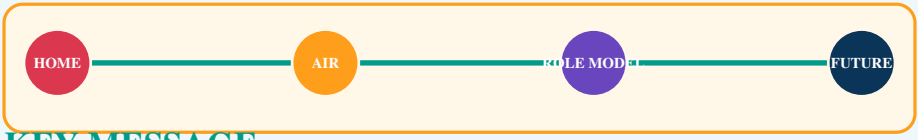
MYTH	Hormone therapy should be taken by every woman to prevent heart disease.
FACT	It is not routine heart prevention; decisions must be individualised.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check blood pressure and recommended blood tests.
- ☐ Maintain strength, aerobic activity and nourishing meals.
- ☐ Discuss sleep and persistent symptoms with a clinician.
- ☐ Review benefits and risks before using hormone therapy.

86. Protect Children and Adolescents from Tobacco Exposure

SECTION I: ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



KEY MESSAGE

A smoke-free childhood protects developing lungs and lowers the chance of future nicotine addiction.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Second-hand smoke harms children immediately and contributes to respiratory illness. Seeing adults smoke and easy access to cigarettes, shisha or vapes can normalise use. Nicotine dependence may begin in adolescence and create decades of cardiovascular exposure. Clear family, school and community rules provide protection.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A family keeps the home and vehicle completely smoke-free, discusses vape marketing and adults model confident refusal.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ban smoking and vaping in homes and vehicles.
2. Keep tobacco and nicotine products out of reach.
3. Teach young people how advertising and peer pressure work.
4. Support adults and adolescents who need help to quit.

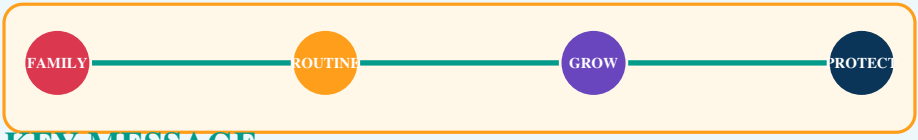
MYTH	Children are protected when adults smoke beside an open window.
FACT	Smoke spreads through enclosed spaces; only a complete smoke-free rule protects them.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ban smoking and vaping in homes and vehicles.
- ☐ Keep tobacco and nicotine products out of reach.
- ☐ Teach young people how advertising and peer pressure work.
- ☐ Support adults and adolescents who need help to quit.

87. Build Healthy Food and Activity Habits Early in Life

SECTION I: ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



KEY MESSAGE

Heart-protective routines learned in childhood can become normal habits for life.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Children need enough food and nutrients for growth, not restrictive dieting. Regular family meals, varied vegetables and fruits, pulses, water, active play and adequate sleep support healthy development. Adults shape the environment through food availability, example, encouragement and limits on sugary drinks and screen time.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A family serves water with meals, includes children in cooking, walks together and allows daily active play rather than focusing on weight comments.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

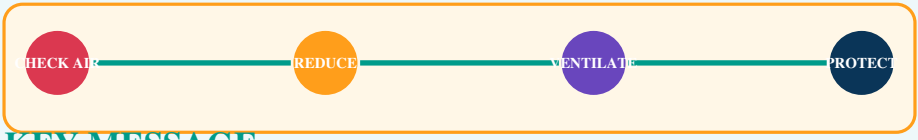
1. Offer varied minimally processed family foods.
2. Make water the usual drink.
3. Provide safe active play and age-appropriate sport.
4. Avoid shaming children about body size or appetite.

MYTH	Heart prevention begins only after adulthood.
FACT	Early environments and routines influence lifelong cardiovascular health.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Offer varied minimally processed family foods.
- ☐ Make water the usual drink.
- ☐ Provide safe active play and age-appropriate sport.
- ☐ Avoid shaming children about body size or appetite.

88. Reduce Exposure to Polluted Air Where Possible



KEY MESSAGE

Limit smoke, fumes and fine-particle exposure at home, work and outdoors when practical.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Air pollution can trigger inflammation, worsen lung and heart disease and increase heart-attack and stroke risk. Sources include traffic, waste burning, tobacco, charcoal, wood smoke and workplace dust or fumes. Individuals cannot remove all pollution, so household choices and community action both matter.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A household improves stove ventilation, keeps children away from cooking smoke and avoids outdoor exercise beside heavy traffic at peak time.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Do not burn waste near homes or schools.
2. Vent cooking stoves and keep rooms smoke-free.
3. Choose lower-traffic routes or times for activity.
4. Use workplace controls and suitable protective equipment.

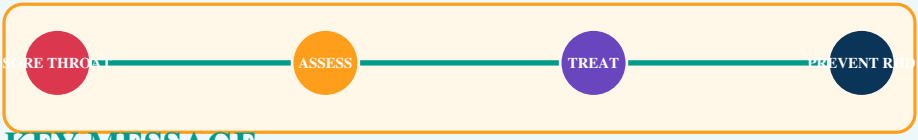
MYTH	Air pollution harms only the lungs.
FACT	Fine particles can affect blood vessels, heart rhythm and cardiovascular risk.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Do not burn waste near homes or schools.
- ☐ Vent cooking stoves and keep rooms smoke-free.
- ☐ Choose lower-traffic routes or times for activity.
- ☐ Use workplace controls and suitable protective equipment.

89. Prevent and Treat Streptococcal Throat Infection Appropriately

SECTION I: ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



KEY MESSAGE

Proper assessment and treatment of streptococcal throat infection can help prevent rheumatic fever and heart-valve damage.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Some sore throats are caused by group A streptococcus. In susceptible children, an untreated infection can trigger rheumatic fever and later rheumatic heart disease. Not every sore throat needs antibiotics, so diagnosis and correct prescribing matter. Completing the prescribed course is important.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A child with fever and painful swallowing is assessed at a clinic rather than given leftover antibiotics. The family follows the full treatment plan.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Seek assessment for severe or persistent sore throat.
2. Use antibiotics only when prescribed for the diagnosed infection.
3. Complete the full course exactly as directed.
4. Return for joint pain, breathlessness or other new symptoms.

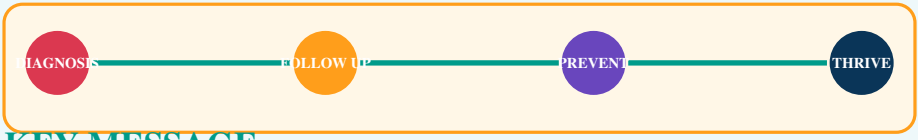
MYTH	Every sore throat should be treated with any available antibiotic.
FACT	Correct assessment prevents misuse while ensuring streptococcal infection is treated properly.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Seek assessment for severe or persistent sore throat.
- ☐ Use antibiotics only when prescribed for the diagnosed infection.
- ☐ Complete the full course exactly as directed.

90. Obtain Continuing Care for Rheumatic or Congenital Heart Disease

SECTION I: ADDRESS SPECIAL RISKS AND LIFE STAGES



KEY MESSAGE

Regular specialist and primary care can prevent complications and support a full life with an existing heart condition.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Rheumatic valve disease and congenital heart disease may require medicine, injections, imaging, dental care, activity guidance or surgery. Symptoms can change over time, including during pregnancy or infection. Missing follow-up may allow valve damage, heart failure, rhythm problems or blood clots to progress unnoticed.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A young adult with rheumatic valve disease keeps injection and clinic dates, carries a diagnosis card and asks for pregnancy and dental-care advice.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Keep all cardiology and primary-care appointments.
2. Take preventive and heart medicines consistently.
3. Ask about dental care, activity, pregnancy and infection prevention.
4. Seek urgent care for fainting, chest pain or worsening breathlessness.

MYTH	A childhood heart diagnosis can be ignored once symptoms improve.
FACT	Many conditions need lifelong monitoring even during symptom-free periods.

MY SPECIAL-RISK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Keep all cardiology and primary-care appointments.
- ☐ Take preventive and heart medicines consistently.
- ☐ Ask about dental care, activity, pregnancy and infection prevention.

HEART PROTECTION ACROSS LIFE



HEALTHY HABITS BEGIN EARLY AND CONTINUE

CHRONIC CARE	Coordinate kidney, diabetes and heart-risk treatment.
LIFE STAGES	Protect pregnancy, postpartum and menopause health.
EARLY LIFE	Build habits and prevent tobacco exposure in childhood.
CONTINUING CARE	Address pollution, rheumatic and congenital heart risks.

THE RIGHT CARE - AT THE RIGHT TIME - FOR EVERY LIFE STAGE

SECTION J

BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



WAYS 91-100: TURN KNOWLEDGE INTO LIFELONG ACTION

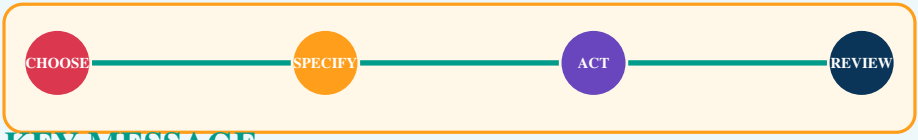
CONSISTENCY COMPLETES THE PLAN

The final section turns prevention into routines at home, work and school. It also teaches heart-attack recognition, urgent action and CPR preparedness. The plan is never finished: measure progress, learn from setbacks and renew priorities every year.

PLAN - PRACTISE - PREPARE - RENEW

91. Set One Specific Heart-Health Goal at a Time

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

Turn a broad intention into one clear action that can be measured and repeated.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

“Be healthier” is difficult to act on. A specific goal states what, how often, when and where. Focusing on one priority reduces overload and makes progress visible. The chosen goal should address an important personal risk, remain realistic and fit available time, money, health and support.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Instead of “exercise more,” a teacher plans a 25-minute brisk walk after school on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday for four weeks.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose one priority from your risk assessment.
2. Describe the exact behaviour, frequency and time.
3. Start small enough to succeed on a difficult week.
4. Set a review date and adjust the next step.

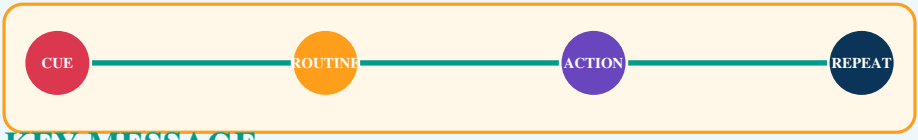
MYTH	Several major changes must begin on the same day to count.
FACT	One sustained change can create a foundation for the next.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose one priority from your risk assessment.
- ☐ Describe the exact behaviour, frequency and time.
- ☐ Start small enough to succeed on a difficult week.
- ☐ Set a review date and adjust the next step.

92. Use Reminders and Routines to Maintain Healthy Actions

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

Attach heart-protective actions to reliable daily cues so they require less memory and motivation.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Habits strengthen when a consistent cue leads to a simple action and useful reward. Phone alarms, calendars, pill organisers, visible shoes and prepared food can reduce missed actions. A reminder should support rather than annoy; if it is repeatedly ignored, the routine may need to become easier or better timed.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A patient keeps medicines beside the breakfast cup, sets a phone alarm and checks the dose on a weekly chart.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Choose one existing routine as the cue.
2. Prepare equipment or food before it is needed.
3. Use one clear reminder instead of many competing alerts.
4. Track completion until the behaviour feels automatic.

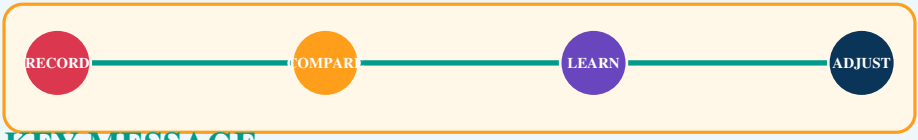
MYTH	Healthy habits should depend entirely on willpower.
FACT	Well-designed cues and environments make consistent action easier.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Choose one existing routine as the cue.
- ☐ Prepare equipment or food before it is needed.
- ☐ Use one clear reminder instead of many competing alerts.
- ☐ Track completion until the behaviour feels automatic.

93. Track Progress in Activity, Diet and Medical Targets

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

Simple tracking reveals patterns and helps turn effort into informed decisions.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Records can show whether activity, blood pressure, glucose, medicine use or food habits are improving. Tracking should support action, not perfection or anxiety. Choose only the measures that matter, use accurate technique and review trends over time. Medical targets should be agreed with a health professional.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A woman records weekly walking minutes, home blood pressure as advised and sugary-drink-free days, then reviews the pattern monthly.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Select two or three useful measures.
2. Record them at a consistent time using accurate methods.
3. Review weekly or monthly trends rather than isolated results.
4. Share relevant records at clinical appointments.

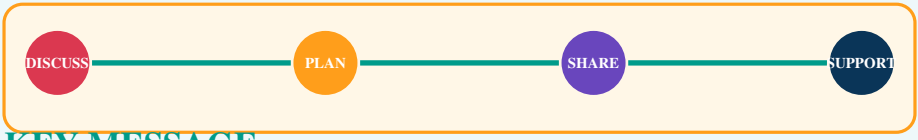
MYTH	If progress is not perfect every day, the plan has failed.
FACT	Trends, obstacles and restarts provide useful information.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Select two or three useful measures.
- ☐ Record them at a consistent time using accurate methods.
- ☐ Review weekly or monthly trends rather than isolated results.
- ☐ Share relevant records at clinical appointments.

94. Involve Family Members in Heart-Healthy Changes

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

Shared household changes are easier to maintain than asking one person to resist an unhealthy environment alone.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Families influence shopping, cooking, tobacco exposure, activity, sleep and clinic attendance. Joint planning can reduce conflict and cost while supporting children and older adults. Support should be encouraging rather than controlling or shaming; each person may need a different pace or medical plan.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A household agrees on water with meals, less salt in shared cooking, evening walks and a completely smoke-free home.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Ask each person which change feels most practical.
2. Choose household rules that benefit everyone.
3. Share shopping, cooking, walking and clinic support.
4. Celebrate consistency without criticising body size.

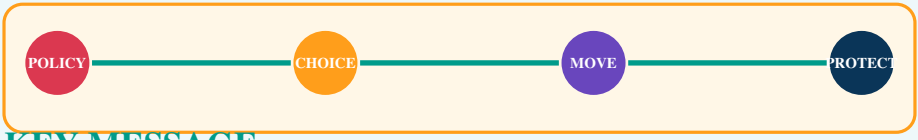
MYTH	Heart-health change is only the patient's private responsibility.
FACT	A supportive family environment can make daily prevention easier.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask each person which change feels most practical.
- ☐ Choose household rules that benefit everyone.
- ☐ Share shopping, cooking, walking and clinic support.
- ☐ Celebrate consistency without criticising body size.

95. Create a Smoke-Free and Food-Smart Workplace

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

Workplaces can make healthy behaviour normal through clear rules, safer food and opportunities to move.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Adults spend many hours at work, where smoke, long sitting, stress, salty snacks and sugary drinks may accumulate. A smoke-free policy protects everyone. Safe water, healthier food choices, movement breaks and first-aid preparation support prevention without singling out individual workers.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A small business prohibits indoor smoking, supplies safe water, offers fruit at meetings and schedules short movement breaks.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Adopt and enforce a complete smoke-free policy.
2. Provide safe water and healthier meeting food.
3. Encourage standing and movement breaks.
4. Keep emergency contacts and first-aid plans visible.

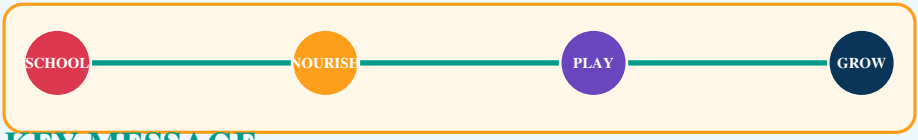
MYTH	Workplace health programmes are only for large companies.
FACT	Small workplaces can make low-cost changes with wide benefit.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Adopt and enforce a complete smoke-free policy.
- ☐ Provide safe water and healthier meeting food.
- ☐ Encourage standing and movement breaks.
- ☐ Keep emergency contacts and first-aid plans visible.

96. Support Healthy School Meals and Physical Activity

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

Schools can build lifelong heart habits by making nourishing food and active movement part of every learner's day.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Children learn from the food, activity and tobacco environment around them. Schools can limit sugary drinks and heavily salty snacks, provide safe water, protect physical education and active play, and teach practical food skills. Learners need enough energy for growth; the goal is quality and routine, not restrictive dieting.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A school adds safe water points, protects physical-education time, offers beans and vegetables and keeps tobacco sales away from the gate.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

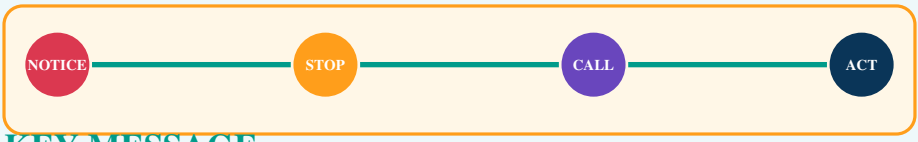
1. Protect regular physical education and active breaks.
2. Improve access to safe water and balanced meals.
3. Limit marketing and sale of tobacco and sugary drinks.
4. Involve learners, parents and food vendors in planning.

MYTH	Academic performance requires removing time for physical activity.
FACT	Movement supports health, concentration and learning.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Protect regular physical education and active breaks.
- ☐ Improve access to safe water and balanced meals.
- ☐ Limit marketing and sale of tobacco and sugary drinks.
- ☐ Involve learners, parents and food vendors in planning.

97. Learn the Warning Signs of Heart Attack



KEY MESSAGE

Recognise possible heart-attack symptoms and treat them as an emergency, even when they are mild or unusual.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Warning signs may include pressure, squeezing or pain in the chest; discomfort in an arm, shoulder, back, neck or jaw; breathlessness; cold sweat; nausea; unusual weakness or light-headedness. Women, older adults and people with diabetes may have less typical symptoms. Only medical assessment can confirm the cause.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

A passenger develops chest pressure, sweating and nausea. Friends stop the journey plan and call emergency help instead of waiting for the pain to pass.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Learn common and less typical warning signs.
2. Stop activity and call emergency services immediately.
3. Keep the person resting and follow dispatcher instructions.
4. Do not let the person drive to hospital.

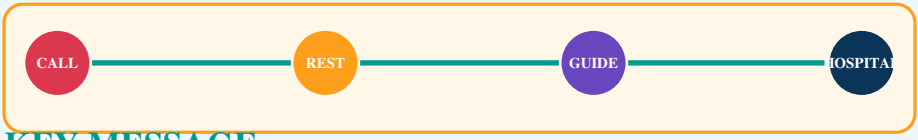
MYTH	A heart attack always causes dramatic crushing chest pain.
FACT	Symptoms can be mild, gradual or different from the classic pattern.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Learn common and less typical warning signs.
- ☐ Stop activity and call emergency services immediately.
- ☐ Keep the person resting and follow dispatcher instructions.
- ☐ Do not let the person drive to hospital.

98. Seek Emergency Care Immediately for Suspected Heart Attack

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

Minutes matter: activate emergency care at once rather than trying home remedies or waiting for certainty.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

A blocked coronary artery deprives heart muscle of oxygen. Earlier treatment can restore blood flow, limit damage and save life. Emergency teams can begin assessment and treatment during transport. The person should not walk around, drive, eat heavily or delay for prayer, herbs or family permission.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

When chest pressure lasts several minutes, a family calls emergency help, unlocks the gate, gathers the medicine list and follows instructions.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Call the local emergency number or nearest capable service.
2. State symptoms, location and callback number clearly.
3. Keep the person calm, still and supervised.
4. Prepare medicines and records without delaying transport.

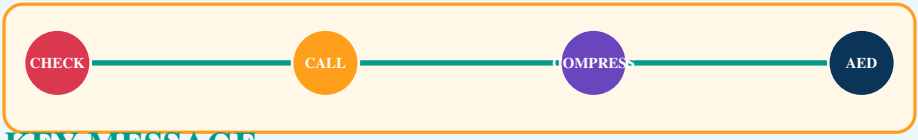
MYTH	It is safer to wait until chest pain becomes unbearable.
FACT	Early emergency treatment offers the best chance to limit heart damage.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Call the local emergency number or nearest capable service.
- ☐ State symptoms, location and callback number clearly.
- ☐ Keep the person calm, still and supervised.
- ☐ Prepare medicines and records without delaying transport.

99. Learn Basic Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Where Training Is Available

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

Practical CPR training can prepare a bystander to act when a person is unresponsive and not breathing normally.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Cardiac arrest stops effective blood flow to the brain and organs. Immediate chest compressions and early defibrillation can improve survival until professional help arrives. Technique is best learned and practised with a qualified instructor. Dispatcher guidance should be followed during a real emergency.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

School staff attend certified CPR and automated external defibrillator training, practise scenarios and display emergency contacts.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Enrol in recognised hands-on CPR training.
2. Refresh skills at the recommended interval.
3. Know where first-aid equipment and an AED are located.
4. In an emergency, call for help and follow dispatcher guidance.

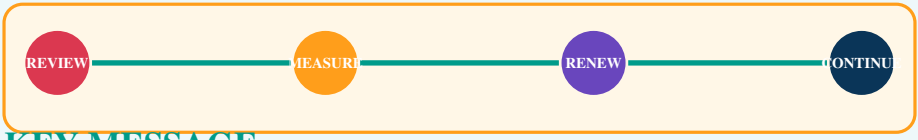
MYTH	Only doctors and nurses can help during cardiac arrest.
FACT	A trained bystander can begin lifesaving action before professionals arrive.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Enrol in recognised hands-on CPR training.
- ☐ Refresh skills at the recommended interval.
- ☐ Know where first-aid equipment and an AED are located.
- ☐ In an emergency, call for help and follow dispatcher guidance.

100. Review and Renew Your Prevention Plan Every Year

SECTION J: BUILD LASTING HEART-SAFE HABITS



KEY MESSAGE

At least yearly, reassess risks, successes, barriers and the next practical priorities.

WHY THIS REDUCES RISK

Age, medicines, pregnancy, work, family responsibilities and health conditions change. A plan that once worked may need new targets or support. Annual review can include blood pressure, recommended tests, vaccination, tobacco status, food, activity, sleep, mental health, medicine adherence and emergency knowledge.

RELEVANT EXAMPLE

Each birthday month, a family reviews clinic dates, risk numbers, smoke-free rules, activity goals and emergency contacts.

PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN

1. Schedule an annual prevention review.
2. Update medicines, conditions, family history and test results.
3. Keep successful habits and replace ineffective strategies.
4. Choose the next one or two specific goals.

MYTH	Prevention is a short programme that ends after reaching one target.
FACT	Heart protection is a lifelong process of review, adjustment and renewal.

MY LASTING-HABIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Schedule an annual prevention review.
- ☐ Update medicines, conditions, family history and test results.
- ☐ Keep successful habits and replace ineffective strategies.
- ☐ Choose the next one or two specific goals.

SECTION J - FINAL ILLUSTRATED RECAP

MAKE HEART PROTECTION A WAY OF LIFE



ONE HUNDRED PRACTICAL WAYS - ONE LASTING PLAN

SET GOALS	Choose one specific action, track it and build routines.
ACT TOGETHER	Involve families, workplaces and schools.
KNOW EMERGENCIES	Recognise heart attack, call early and learn CPR.
RENEW YEARLY	Review risk, preserve success and choose the next step.

YOUR HEART-HEALTH PLAN CONTINUES BEYOND PAGE 120