



The Disabled Police Association

# Wellbeing Resources

Heart Health

## ‘Look after your heart and your heart will look after you’

The Egyptians believed that the heart was the seat of all emotion, thoughts and reason. Over time these have been disproved, however the heart symbolises love. It keeps all the other organs going by supplying them with blood.

Are you looking  
after your heart?



The heart is a very important organ in the body, not only can it flutter when you are in love, it is essentially a pump. Its purpose is to supply the rest of the body with oxygen and nutrient rich blood and take away waste products such as carbon dioxide.

Collectively, heart and circulatory diseases cause more than a quarter of all deaths in the UK. Twice as many men suffer heart attacks than women and more people suffer with heart or circulatory diseases such as angina and strokes in the North of England than in the South.

The good news is that you can help yourself!! which reduces some of the risk factors by making changes to lifestyle and seeking medical advice if required.

**Blood pressure** – often referred to as the silent threat, it is important to keep blood pressure at or below the recommended level. Blood pressure is the measure of pressure the heart puts on your blood vessels when it pumps blood around the body. It is given as two readings, the higher is the pressure when the blood is leaving the heart, and the lower is when the heart is refilling with

blood. If you can imagine the pressure constantly being high in your central heating at home, eventually it will break, or a pipe will burst – the same theory applies to the body.

**Physical Activity:** if you are inactive, you have twice the risk of dying of heart disease as someone who is active. Physical activity not only helps your heart, but it keeps your blood pressure down and help fight other illnesses to help you feel better in yourself. Go for a walk at lunchtime, if you work in an office, move from that chair behind your desk. Have a look at some of the other Wellbeing Resources which may also help.



**Smoking:** stopping smoking is the single most important thing you can do to look after your heart. It can help to lower blood pressure – imagine that central heating system with the high pressure, but there is sludge in the pipes to make them smaller – the pressure will rise higher.

**High blood cholesterol:** cholesterol is a fatty substance found in the blood, evidence has shown that saturated fats increase the levels of cholesterol which can also create the sludge in blood vessels increasing blood pressure. Taking care of diet and cutting down on saturated fats can help.

**Diet:** a healthy balanced diet, ensuring a controlled intake of saturated fats will help to keep your blood cholesterol low and your blood pressure at a healthy level. Keeping yourself at a healthy weight will not only help your heart but also lower your chances of other diseases such as diabetes.

Men are more likely to develop heart disease, in addition the older you get the higher your risk, especially if there

is a family history of heart disease or high blood pressure.

It has been proven that those who carry more weight around their middle (typically apple shaped body) also have a higher incidence of heart disease. This is all important to help keeping yourself fit and healthy.

Are you 40 or over??? You can book a health check at your GP's surgery, where they can test your blood pressure and assess your lifestyle, giving you advice on how to look after yourself.

***So if your heart isn't broken.....try to keep it that way by looking after it.***

More information about looking after your heart can be found via the NHS Living Well website. Their top tips include the following

- ✓ Eat more fibre
- ✓ Get your five a day
- ✓ Cut down on salt
- ✓ Eat fish
- ✓ Drink less alcohol
- ✓ Read the labels on food

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Healthyhearts/Pages/lifestylechanges.aspx>