

5 TIPS FOR A HEALTHY TICKER

IN HONOR OF AMERICAN HEART MONTH, REGISTERED DIETITIAN, NUTRITIONIST AND SLIMFAST PLAN CONSULTANT MARYANN WALSH OFFERS SOME POTENTIALLY LIFE-**SAVING** ADVICE



DON'T WAIT TILL IT'S TOO LATE

You shouldn't assume you're immune to heart issues if you're under the age of 50. Being overweight and having bad dietary and lifestyle habits can lead to issues like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, inflammation and diabetes even in people in their 20s and 30s. And fostering healthy habits earlier in life will only work to your advantage as you get older.

RESPECT YOUR BEDTIME

Sleep is so important! We're all different and can operate on various amounts of rest, but you have to make sure you're getting enough sleep for you. When you're not, exhaustion can really mess with your body's hunger levels and satiety hormones (ghrelin and leptin) as well as increase stress hormones and contribute to insulin resistance. People forget that sleep can affect weight control.

CHOOSE CARBS WISELY

Carbohydrates are often labeled "the bad guy," but you can enjoy them in moderation as long as you pick the right ones. Whole grains are superior to refined grains and carbs from sugary juices, alcohol or candy, which should be consumed sparingly. The most important thing is portion control! If you go by the plate method, a serving of healthy carbs should make up a quarter of your meal.

MOVE IT, MOVE IT

You don't need to join a fancy gym or have a room full of equipment to get exercise. Go for a 30-minute walk (even if it's at a shopping mall during the colder months), and look for exercise videos you can do at home. There are tons of free workout tutorials for all levels available online via sites like YouTube and Pinterest.

STEP ON THE SCALE

Just a 5- to 10-percent weight loss can improve HDL (good cholesterol) and blood pressure, decrease triglycerides and lower insulin and inflammation levels. What does that look like in practical terms? A 200-pound person could begin seeing these positive results by losing 10 to 20 pounds.

