

**February 2025**

# Wellness News

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Feb 7<sup>th</sup> wear red day

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**“Love yourself to health!”**

Drew Rubin (rubinchiro)



**Anthem members:** You can view and manage your benefits, access wellness tools and resources to improve your overall wellbeing. Simply scan this QR code with your smartphone's camera to download the Sydney Health app.

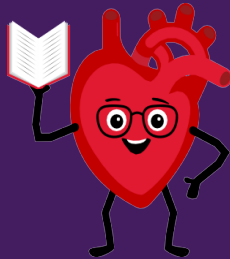
Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>



Celebrate National Wear Red Day

National Wear Red Day is the first Friday in February. Wear red and encourage others to do the same. **Help raise awareness that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. and largely preventable.**

**Anthem members:** Please visit **Anthem.com** or our **Sydney Health** app to find programs, tools and resources available to you. For members living with a chronic condition like, Coronary artery disease or heart failure please take advantage of our **ConditionCare program** – confidential, and no cost to plan members including your covered family members.



Heart Smart Basics  
What to Know to Keep Yours Healthy

Being smart about your heart means knowing what causes heart disease and what your individual risk factors are. This fact sheet defines common heart-related terms you should know and sample questions to ask your healthcare provider to help keep your heart healthy.

### General Heart Terms

- Heart
- Heart rate
- Heart health
- Heart disease
- Cardiovascular disease
- Coronary heart disease

The heart is a strong, muscular organ that pumps blood throughout your body.

Heart rate, also referred to as your pulse, is the number of times your heart beats in one minute. Resting heart rates vary from person to person.

Heart health is the overall well-being of your heart. [Heart-healthy living](#) involves understanding your risk factors, making healthy choices, and taking steps to reduce your chances of getting heart disease.

Heart disease is a catchall phrase for a variety of conditions that affect the heart’s structure and function.

Cardiovascular disease is the term for all types of diseases that affect the heart or blood vessels.

Often simply referred to as “heart disease,” [coronary heart disease](#) is the most common form and occurs when plaque (a combination of fat, cholesterol, calcium, and other substances found in the blood) builds up in your arteries.

The plaque reduces the amount of oxygen-rich blood getting to your heart.



*Plaque can also lead to blood clots, which block blood flow and are the most common cause of a heart attack.*

### Medical Emergencies

- Heart attack
- Cardiac arrest
- Stroke

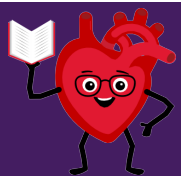
*Act fast. Call 9–1–1.*

A **heart attack**, also known as a myocardial infarction, happens when the flow of blood that brings oxygen to a part of your heart muscle suddenly becomes blocked. Your heart can’t get enough oxygen. If blood flow is not restored quickly, the heart muscle will begin to die.

**Cardiac arrest** occurs when the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops pumping. If this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs.

A **stroke** happens when blood flow to the brain is blocked. This prevents the brain from getting oxygen and nutrients from blood. Without oxygen and nutrients, brain cells begin to die within minutes. A stroke is also called a transient ischemic attack or cerebrovascular accident.





# Heart Smart Basics

## What to Know to Keep Yours Healthy

### Blood Pressure Terms

- Blood pressure
- Hypertension
- Preeclampsia
- Blood pressure monitor
- Self-Monitored Blood Pressure (SMBP)

**Blood pressure** is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries as the heart pumps blood. [Blood pressure](#) is measured using two numbers – diastolic and systolic. Systolic is the first number and is the pressure when blood is pumped out of the heart. Diastolic is the second number and is the pressure between heartbeats when the heart is filling with blood.

**Hypertension**, also known as high blood pressure, develops when blood flows through your arteries at higher than normal pressures.



*Healthy blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg. High blood pressure occurs when blood pressure is consistently 130/80 mm Hg or higher.*

**Preeclampsia** is a type of high blood pressure that occurs only during [pregnancy](#). It occurs after the 20th week of pregnancy.

A **blood pressure monitor** has an inflatable cuff that wraps around the arm. A healthcare provider will inflate the cuff, which gently tightens on your arm. The cuff has a gauge on it that will measure your blood pressure. The gauge uses a unit of measurement called millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) to measure the pressure in your blood vessels.

**Self-Monitoring Blood Pressure (SMBP)** involves a patient’s regular use of personal blood pressure monitors to measure their blood pressure away from a doctor’s office or hospital — usually at home. These blood pressure monitors are easy and safe to use.

Blood Pressure Levels	
Classification	Systolic and Diastolic Readings
Normal	Systolic: less than 120 mm Hg Diastolic: less than 80 mm Hg
Elevated	Systolic: 120-129 mm Hg Diastolic: less than 80 mm Hg
High blood pressure	Systolic: 130 mm Hg or higher Diastolic: 80 mm Hg or higher

### Cholesterol Terms

- Cholesterol
- High density lipoprotein (HDL)
- Low density lipoprotein (LDL)
- Triglycerides

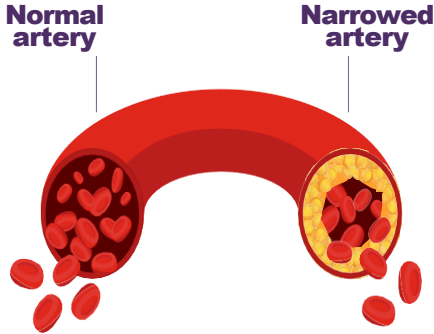
**Cholesterol** is a waxy, fat-like substance in your cells. Our bodies generally make all the cholesterol needed for good health. [Cholesterol](#) helps make hormones, vitamin D, and substances to help you digest foods.

Small packages, called lipoproteins, carry cholesterol through your bloodstream. Two kinds of lipoproteins carry cholesterol:

**High-density lipoprotein (HDL)** is the “good” cholesterol. HDL helps your body get rid of cholesterol so it doesn’t clog your arteries.

**Low-density lipoprotein (LDL)** is the “bad” cholesterol. LDL deposits cholesterol inside the blood vessels that carry blood to your heart and other parts of your body. Over time, this may cause your arteries to narrow or be blocked.

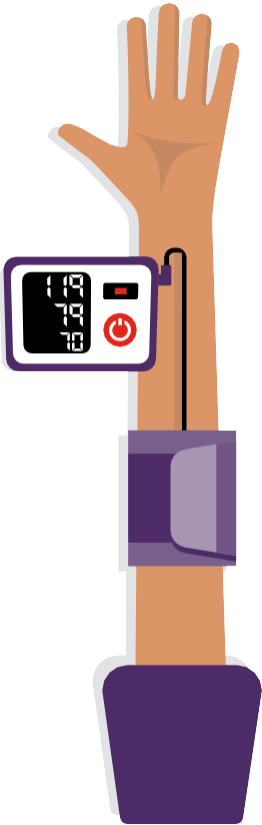
**Triglycerides** are a type of fat in your blood that your body uses for energy. A combination of high triglyceride and low HDL levels can increase your risk for heart attack and stroke.



Desirable Cholesterol Numbers for Adults	
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL
Non-HDL cholesterol	Less than 130 mg/dL
HDL cholesterol	Above 40 mg/dL in men Above 50 mg/dL in women

\* Lipid measurements in this table are measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood.  
\*\* If your triglycerides and non-HDL are above these numbers or your HDL is below, you may want to discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Blood Pressure	Heart Disease Risk Factors	Staying Heart Healthy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What was my blood pressure reading today and what do the numbers mean for me?</li><li>• How often should I have my blood pressure checked?</li><li>• What do my blood pressure numbers mean for me if I’m pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant?</li><li>• Can any medicines that I take (prescribed or over-the counter) affect my blood pressure?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What risk factors do I have for heart disease? Is there anything I can do to change these risks?</li><li>• How can cholesterol affect my heart health? What are my cholesterol levels and are they in a healthy range?</li><li>• What is my BMI and is there a goal I should be working towards? What is my healthy weight range?</li><li>• If I smoke or drink, how does it affect my heart health?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you recommend I do between now and my next visit that can lower my risk for heart disease?</li><li>• How much physical activity do I need to keep my heart healthy?</li><li>• What foods or diets that can help keep my heart healthy?</li><li>• How can managing stress affect my heart health?</li><li>• What tests should I get to get a better understanding of my heart health?</li></ul>





# 5 Tips for Eating Healthy On A Budget



While the words “healthy food” may make you think of high grocery bills, enjoying delicious food and well-rounded meals packed with nutrients doesn’t have to break the bank. With some creativity and planning, you can enjoy healthy and affordable meals.

Here are five tips for how to eat healthy on a budget.

## 1. Plan Ahead

- Eating healthy meals on a budget is easier when you plan ahead. The 10 minutes you spend planning meals can help you save time and money all week.
- **Check your store’s website or app for coupons** and to see what’s on sale.
  - **Plan meals before you shop.** Knowing what you can get on sale and what’s already in your pantry will help you stay on track. Check out [MyPlate Kitchen](#) or [eatright.org](#) for recipe ideas.
  - **Make a list.** This will help you avoid impulse purchases at the store.
  - **Think about how to use leftovers.** For example, use extra veggies and rice in soups, salads, and stir-fries.

## 2. Be A Smart Shopper

The first rule of grocery shopping on a budget is don’t go to the store when you’re hungry. All the junk food will be too hard to resist. Then, stick to your shopping list and:

- Buy big bags of dried beans, lentils, oats, and rice. These staple items are generally cheaper in large amounts.
- Choose frozen fruits and vegetables most of the year. They’re cheaper, last longer, and are just as nutritious as fresh.
- Watch for deals on seasonal fruits and veggies. Enjoying peak-of-the-season berries, melons, squash, and corn can be a low-cost treat.
- Explore generic or store brands. They’re usually the same quality as name-brand items but less expensive.
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## 3. Try New Foods

*Variety is the spice of life — and grocery shopping on a budget.*

- **Eat different proteins.** Eggs, canned fish like tuna or salmon, tofu, beans, and legumes are easier on your wallet than meat. If you still want meat, look for sales on lean meat like chicken and turkey.
- **Cook your meals and make extra.** Cooking at home is cheaper and healthier. Plus, you know what’s in your meal and can control the portion sizes. Leftovers from a home-cooked meal are a great alternative to take-out on a busy night.
- **Grow a garden.** It may take extra effort, but seeds are inexpensive, and you’ll always know your produce is fresh.

## 4. Avoid Convenience Foods

It’s hard to resist the lure of easy meals and snacks, especially when you’re hungry, tired, or it’s on sale.

- Buy fewer [processed foods](#), such as hot dogs, frozen pizza, and chips. These are generally high in fat, sugar, and sodium.
- Avoid single-serving convenience foods, like cereal bars, sugary yogurts, and lunch snacks. They tend to be more expensive and less filling per serving.
- Steer clear of fast food. While pulling into the drive-thru may seem easy and cheap, it’s generally less healthy and more expensive.

## 5. Remember The Benefits Of Eating Healthy

It’s important to remember the cost of a bad diet. Eating nutritious foods can help you save money over the long term by keeping your body strong.

[Medical News Today](#) says that the benefits of eating healthy include:

- Reduced risk of diseases, like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Better memory.
- Healthy skin, teeth, and eyes.
- Improved mood.
- More energy and better sleep.
- Stronger immune system.

As you explore different ways to eat healthy for less, you’ll discover what best works for you and your family. Remember, overall well-being means taking care of all the aspects of your life — including physical, social, and financial. If you think creatively and make it a priority, you’ll see how far your food dollar can stretch without sacrificing your health.

**Anthem members:** Please visit **Anthem.com** or our **Sydney Health** app to find programs, tools and resources available to you. **Check out Community Resources** to Find local community resources: Members can search via zip code to search for free or reduced cost services. Cost for services aren't covered by your plan. Categories like: Education, Food, Work, Goods, Health, Legal, Housing, Care, Money, Transit. In Sydney select MENU, then ACCESS CARE, My Health Dashboard scroll down to Community Resources.

# Gut check: How's your digestive health?

There's a reason the old saying tells us to "go with our gut." Our gut — also called our digestive system — is a powerhouse in our body. It gets rid of toxins, breaks down the food we eat, and puts the nutrients from that food to work. A healthy gut is also core to our overall well-being — it affects everything from our mental health to our immune system.

## Long-term risks

If we don't take care of our digestive system, it can also put us at risk for more serious issues. Poor long-term gut health is tied to:

- Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Diabetes
- Obesity

## Signs of trouble

Our body has several ways of letting us know something in our gut might be off, including:

- Persistent bloating, diarrhea, or stomach pain.
- Unexplained weight loss or gain.
- Blood in the stool and changes to how often you need to go.
- Heartburn and indigestion.
- Skin irritations, such as acne or eczema.
- Frequent mood changes, including anxiety or irritability.

Talk to your doctor if you're experiencing any of these symptoms. They can suggest tests or treatment to get to the root of the issue.

## Feed your gut well

The billions of bacteria in your gut are like the engine that keeps it running. Eating the right foods helps keep the good and bad bacteria in our gut well-balanced so it works correctly. Here are a few tips:

- **Eat a diverse diet full of fruits and vegetables.** A produce-rich diet helps make the good bacteria in your gut stronger, which keep things running smoothly.
- **Focus on fiber.** Fiber keeps you regular. It also helps lower cholesterol and blood pressure.
- **Make room for prebiotics and probiotics.** Probiotics and prebiotics work together to feed your gut bacteria and keep it healthy. You can take them as supplements or look for them in many natural sources.
- **Limit artificial sweeteners, red meat, and processed foods.** These all feed the bad bacteria in your gut, which can make you feel sick. They're also linked to other problems, such as heart disease and diabetes.



## Talk to your doctor about gut health

A doctor can help you make gut-healthy changes. To find a doctor in your plan's network, scan the QR code above with your phone's camera.



## Other healthy gut habits

Because our gut is so connected to the rest of our body, there's more to keeping it healthy than just eating right.

- Exercise regularly.
- Don't smoke.
- Keep your stress in check.
- Get enough sleep.

It's also important to stay up on [regular preventive screenings, such as colonoscopies](#).



# Sheet-Pan Sesame Chicken & Broccoli with Scallion-Ginger Sauce

In this healthy sheet-pan chicken recipe, meaty bone-in chicken thighs and broccoli florets are tossed with sesame oil and roasted on the same pan for a delicious and easy dinner with minimal cleanup. While the chicken and broccoli cook, whip together the simple scallion-ginger sauce. The sauce would also be wonderful spooned over salmon, tofu or grain bowls; it is easily doubled or tripled!

**Prep Time:** 25 mins      **Servings:** 4  
**Additional Time:** 35 mins      **Yield:** 4 servings  
**Total Time:** 1 hr

## Ingredients

- 8 cups broccoli florets with 2-inch stalks attached
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil, divided
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 2 pounds bone-in chicken thighs, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons avocado oil
- 3 tablespoons minced scallion
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame seeds

## DIRECTIONS

### STEP 1

Place a large rimmed baking sheet in the oven. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

### STEP 2

Combine broccoli, 1 tablespoon sesame oil and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a large bowl. In another bowl toss chicken with the remaining 1 tablespoon sesame oil and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper.

### STEP 3

Place the chicken skin-side-down in a single layer on one side of the preheated pan. Roast for 15 minutes.

Turn the chicken over and add the broccoli to the other side of the pan. Continue cooking, turning the broccoli halfway through, until the chicken is just cooked through and the broccoli is tender, 20 to 25 minutes more.

### STEP 4 (Scallion-Ginger Sauce)

Meanwhile, heat a small skillet over medium-high heat until almost smoking. Add avocado oil, scallion, ginger, rice vinegar and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring, for 15 seconds. Remove from heat.

### STEP 5

Serve the chicken and broccoli drizzled with the scallion-ginger sauce and sprinkled with sesame seeds.



Nutrition Facts: Calories 422 Fat 28g Carbs 8g Protein 37g

Nutrition Profile:  
[Low-Carb](#) [Nut-Free](#) [Dairy-Free](#) [Healthy Pregnancy](#) [Healthy Aging](#) [Healthy Immunity](#) [Soy-Free](#) [High-Protein](#) [Egg-Free](#) [Gluten-Free](#) [Low-Calorie](#)