



American Heart Association®

Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic
Health Initiative™

Daily Habits That Protect CKM Health

(Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic Health)

**A Guide to Protecting the Heart, Kidneys & Metabolic Systems
(how the body creates, stores and uses energy)**

Heart health, kidney health and metabolic health are closely connected, and together they are known as cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic health (CKM health). Problems in one area can affect the others.



Life's Essential 8™ Steps Improve CKM Health

The American Heart Association's **Life's Essential 8** is a list of healthy steps that can improve overall health. Knowing Life's Essential 8 helps you understand the key habits and health measures that directly shape your risk of CKM health problems over time.

Over time, poor CKM health can progress to CKM syndrome, meaning early risk factors can build up and affect the heart, kidneys and metabolic system together, rather than **separately**.

Working on these 8 healthy actions can:

- Lower stress on the heart
 - Protect kidneys
 - Improve blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure, body weight, cholesterol and triglyceride control
 - Lower risk of heart attack, stroke and kidney failure
 - Slow or prevent progression of cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic syndrome (CKM syndrome)
- Improvement in even one area can support the others.**



Eat Better

Healthier foods can help blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and triglycerides stay in healthy ranges. This benefits your heart, kidneys and metabolic system.

- ✓ More vegetables and fruits
- ✓ Whole grains, (like, oats, brown rice, quinoa)
- ✓ Plant-based proteins (like beans, legumes & nuts)
- ✓ Lean animal proteins (like skinless poultry, seafood, low fat dairy)
- ✓ Less salty and fatty food
- ✓ Stay hydrated. Drink water throughout the day
- ✓ Less added sugar

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Be More Active

Adults should get 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week.

Moderate exercises include:

- ✓ Walking
- ✓ Gardening/yard work
- ✓ Dancing

Vigorous exercises include:

- ✓ Running
- ✓ Swimming
- ✓ Biking

Movement can help lower and manage blood pressure, keep a healthier weight and improve blood sugar control. Small amounts of activity can still provide meaningful benefits.



Quit Tobacco (or Do Not Start)

Tobacco use, including vaping and other nicotine products can:

- Damage blood vessels
- Raise blood pressure
- Increase risk of heart attack or stroke

Support programs and medications can help with quitting. A buddy system or support program can help with some of the common struggles of quitting. Call 1-800-QuitNow (784-8669) today. This is a free phone service that helps people quit smoking.



Get Healthy Sleep

Adults should aim for 7–9 hours per night.

Poor sleep can increase risk for:

- High blood pressure
- High blood glucose (sugar)
- High cholesterol
- Weight gain
- Heart disease

Good sleep allows the body to repair and reset.

Know the Healthy Numbers

These four numbers play a major role in CKM health.



Manage Blood Pressure

High blood pressure can:

- Make the heart work harder
- Increase kidney damage

Ask your care team about a blood pressure goal. Understand how changes in behavior – sleep, nutrition, physical activity, etc. – can help you reach your goal.

Take medications as prescribed by your health care professional team.



Control Cholesterol

High levels of “bad” (LDL) cholesterol and low levels of “good” (HDL) cholesterol can:

- Clog blood vessels
 - Raise the risk of heart attack and stroke
- Healthy cholesterol levels allow blood to flow to the heart and kidneys and helps maintain your overall metabolic health.



Manage Blood Glucose (Blood Sugar)

High blood sugar can:

- Damage the kidneys
- Injure blood vessels
- Damage eyes
- Raise heart disease risk and stroke risk
- Damage nerves

High blood sugar can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke and kidney disease over time.



Manage Weight

Excess weight is associated with:

- High blood pressure
- High blood sugar
- Poor liver health
- Strain on the heart and kidneys

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight has many benefits and helps lower your risk of CKM syndrome.

How the 8 Work Together

Improvement in one area often supports improvement in the others.

Small Changes = Big Results



Everything does not need to change at once.

Start with one healthy lifestyle change or personal health goal:

- ☐ Add one vegetable to at least one meal a day; introduce a new one every week
- ☐ Take a 10-minute walk
- ☐ Start checking blood pressure
- ☐ Go to bed 30 minutes earlier
- ☐ Quit nicotine use

One healthy habit supports the whole body, and all three systems.



When these essential 8 are in a healthy range, they help protect against the development and progression of CKM syndrome and support healthier aging across heart, kidneys and metabolic systems.



Learn more about your CKM health at heart.org/myckmhealth

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