

# Achieve

A Newsletter  
for AvMed  
Members

## ▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE

### The First 5 Things to Do After a Heart Attack

**F**ew experiences in life are as scary as a heart attack — and coming to terms with what happened can take time. If you're one of the 735,000 Americans who had a heart attack this year, it's normal to be anxious about what's next. The good news is that you have a health care team that cares as much about your recovery as you do.

"Your doctor's goal is to get you back to living a full and healthy life," says Michael Longo, M.D., a cardiologist at Virginia Mason Hospital in Seattle.



"They'll give you a plan that works best for you."

Here are Dr. Longo's tips to help you take control of your heart health after a heart attack.

#### **Do your homework.**

You'll get tons of helpful information from your doctor when you're discharged. Take time to read through it and write down your questions as you go. Doing research on

your own can be helpful too, but your care team will be able to provide you the best information for your unique condition.

**Take your medicine.** Your doctor will likely prescribe one or more medications to help with recovery and prevent future problems. It's important to take these meds as directed. But don't be afraid to ask what each one is and why you need *(Continued)*

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to take it. Understanding the why can help you feel empowered and motivated to follow through.

**Welcome change.** In addition to meds, your doctor may recommend some lifestyle changes, such as getting more physical activity, changing what you eat, or managing stress. You don't need to (and shouldn't!) make all of these changes at once. Work with your health care team to set realistic goals and priorities. Then work toward making these changes one at a time.

**Make a plan.** A cardiac rehabilitation program will help you recover and thrive. But remember, your recovery plan should be tailored to *you* — your lifestyle, preferences, and goals. Be an active participant in setting your goals. If you're struggling to stick to your care plan,



work with your team to change things up.

**Get help.** Depression is three times as common after a heart attack. Let your doctor know if you're experiencing depression or anxiety. They can evaluate your moods, recommend treatment, and refer you to specialized care if needed. Meditation and other mindful practices can also help relieve stress and elevate mood.

### 3 Essential Health Checks to Get Each Year

**1 Blood pressure** Hypertension has little to no symptoms. Get your blood pressure measured at the doctor's office regularly — and at least once a year.

**2 Cholesterol** This includes your total cholesterol, LDL, HDL, and triglycerides.

**3 Diabetes** You should be screened regularly for diabetes with either a fasting blood glucose test or an A1C test, which measures your average blood glucose over the past few months.

### We're Here for You

Your Case Manager can connect you to the resources you need. Just call **1-833-609-0735**.





## Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.

### Be a Super Shopper!

**H**ealthy, delicious food on a budget? Yes, you can! Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's registered dietitian, shows you five simple ways to conquer the checkout line and be a star in the kitchen.

#### Protein for pennies.

Protein is important, but it doesn't have to come from the meat counter. Beans, peas, and chickpeas are inexpensive plant-based options. A pound of dry lentils costs only a couple of dollars and can make a large pot of lentil soup. With a salad on the side, you've got a low-cost, high-protein (and delicious) meal.

#### Do a deep freeze.

Fresh produce can be expensive and goes bad

so quickly. Instead, head to the freezer aisle. Frozen fruits and vegetables have the same nutritional value as fresh. (But check labels and avoid added salt, sugar, and sauces.) Keep



frozen veggies on hand to add to pastas, soups, stir fry, or even convenience foods like mac and cheese for a health boost.

**Make a list.** Knowing exactly what you need when you go to the store can save time and money.

Plan a few meals (get the family involved!) and build a grocery list from there. And don't forget to restock staples. I like to take a photo of my pantry and fridge to remind me of what I need. Or, keep a running list on the fridge that everyone can add to as things run out.

#### Don't be brand loyal.

Prices can vary from brand to brand. Compare prices and try different brands when they're on sale or if you have a coupon. Try store brands too. They're almost always less expensive, and the quality is just as good.

**Keep it simple.** It's a myth that eating healthy is more costly. It's not about elaborate meals and exotic superfoods. Focus on

basic ingredients and simple recipes. Practice habits like repurposing foods — leftovers are a great way to stretch the budget — and get the family involved in planning and cooking. Eating well doesn't mean going broke.

## Recipe



### Cantaloupe, Cucumber, and Jicama Salsa

Serves 8 / Serving size: ½ cup  
Prep time: 20 minutes

Sweet and savory with a cool crunch, this budget-friendly salsa is great on tacos or with grilled fish or chicken.

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup finely chopped cantaloupe
- 1 cucumber, chopped
- 1 medium jicama (or 2 tart apples), peeled and chopped
- 2 green onions, finely chopped
- Juice of 1 lime
- ¼ tsp. chili powder (optional)

#### Directions

In a large bowl, gently mix together all ingredients. Let sit 10 minutes at room temperature to allow flavors to marry.

**Handy Hint:** New to jicama? Nicknamed the “Mexican potato,” this nutritious root veggie is juicy and crunchy, like an apple, with a mildly sweet flavor.

Calories: 45  
Fat: 0 g (0 g sat. fat)  
Carbs: 11 g (4 g fiber)  
Protein: 1 g  
Sodium: 10 mg