



Health

The latest news and wisdom so you can live life to the fullest

The Critical Info Your Doc Needs

For the most accurate and customized heart care, you'll want to share as much as possible with your physician. To ensure that you don't forget what you want to say in the moment, write down your health history and take it with you to your appointment. Here, a few key details to include:

♥ YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

Timing matters.

Family history is more than a list of the diseases your relatives have had. Be sure to jot down *when* a loved one experienced a health incident or was diagnosed—it's very different if your mom had a heart attack at 50 than if she had one at 80.

♥ YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY

Include issues that may seem irrelevant.

Certain aspects of your health can have a surprising impact on your heart. Write down any pregnancy complications, autoimmune diseases, and issues such as sleep apnea or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). These are all linked to an increased risk of heart disease for women.

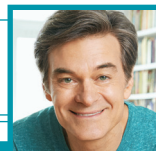
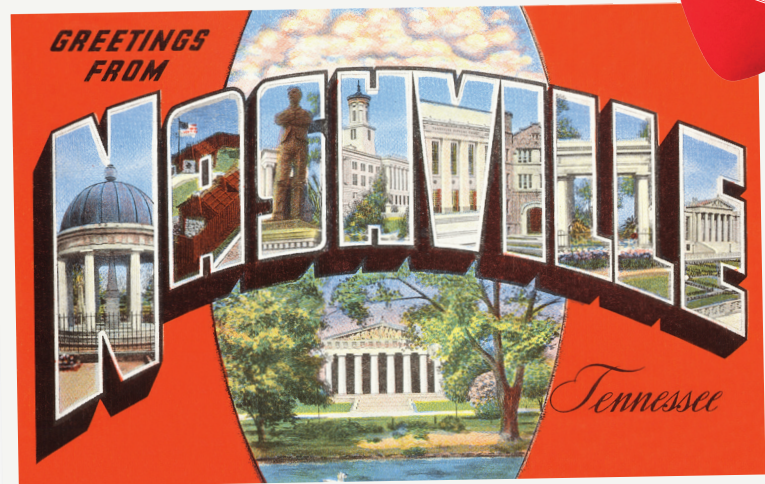
♥ YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS

List all your meds.

Include supplements and other over-the-counter products, because your doc needs to know everything that's in your medicine cabinet to best advise you. For example, certain statins, which help lower cholesterol, can interact with herbal supplements, affecting how well the medication works.

SOURCE: Jennifer H. Mieres, M.D., cardiologist at Northwell Health, *Woman's Day* advisory board member, and coauthor of the new book *Heart Smart for Women*





TALK BACK
With Dr. Oz

I get barely five hours of sleep. Is that bad for my heart?

Dr. Oz: You're not doing it any favors. Regularly getting less than six hours a night increases your risk of heart attack, and researchers have tied sleep-robbing conditions like insomnia to a greater risk of other issues, such as hypertension.

Yikes!
Why is that?

Dr. Oz: Lack of sleep makes levels of cortisol (a stress hormone) and inflammation markers in the blood shoot up. Also, when you're exhausted, it's harder to make healthy food and exercise choices.

So what can I do differently?

Dr. Oz: Protect your sleep at all costs and try to go to bed early enough to get the rest you need. Come up with a ritual to signal to your mind and body that it's time to doze off, like listening to relaxing music.

A Healthier Community

Where you live can have a positive (or negative) impact on your well-being. As part of its new Cities and Communities With Heart Initiative, Women's Heart Alliance (WHA) is working with Nashville city leaders and health institutes to address barriers that prevent women from getting heart-healthy. "Our goal is to stop needless deaths from heart disease, the number-one killer of women," says British Robinson, CEO of the WHA. Below are three ways you can make a difference in *your* community:

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

See your doctor for a heart check. Download and print a wallet card at womensheartalliance.org/checklist, jot down your numbers, and send the link to loved ones to spread a healthy message. (If you understand your risk factors early on, you could prevent an incident later.)

ASK FOR BETTER FOOD

Contact the manager of your local supermarket and request more produce options. See if your town's municipal department can set up a farmers' market if there isn't one already. At your workplace, request healthier food in the cafeteria and in vending machines.

MAKE WALKING EASY

Visit walkyourcity.org and use its tool kit to create simple signs you can post that offer information and directions to encourage people to walk—for example, "It is a 15-minute walk to a historic monument" or "It is 5 minutes by foot to borrow a book."



NEW BLOOD PRESSURE NUMBERS TO KNOW

130/80 mm Hg is the minimum blood pressure reading now considered hypertension, according to new guidelines from the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology. For decades, hypertension was defined as 140/90 mm Hg and above, but new research shows that risk of heart disease, stroke, and other issues drops as blood pressure numbers decrease. With these changes, 46% of U.S. adults are now believed to have high blood pressure. If you're in the new hypertension category and you have a low risk of heart disease, your doctor will likely first encourage more exercise and a better diet, but if your risk is high, you may need meds to stay in the healthy range.

GETTY IMAGES. DR. OZ: BRIAN DOBEN.