



# ON TRACK WITH BARIX

Support to Keep You On Track With a Healthful Lifestyle

## Heart Health

STAY STRONG WITH LIFE'S SIMPLE 7

It seems that most people are in denial about the state of their heart health. If asked, they would say that their heart disease risk is pretty low. The fact is that 94% of U.S. adults have at least one risk factor for heart disease and our children are not far behind. Our lifestyles are the biggest reason why heart disease is still the number one killer in America. And as hard as it may be, we can improve our lifestyles. In honor of Valentine's Day, let's make sure we are taking steps to keep our hearts healthy.

The American Heart Association has identified seven lifestyle factors that contribute to heart health and named them **Life's Simple 7**:

- **manage blood pressure**
- **don't smoke**
- **maintain a healthy weight**
- **engage in regular physical activity**
- **eat a healthy diet**
- **take charge of cholesterol**
- **keep blood sugar at healthy levels**

### MANAGE BLOOD PRESSURE

Hypertension or high blood pressure is the greatest risk factor for heart disease. One third of adults currently

have hypertension and 90% of us will develop it at some point in our lives. When you have high blood pressure, the extra pressure causes small tears in the blood vessels. As your body heals these tears, scars are formed that trap plaque, causing the vessels to become brittle, weak and blocked. This can lead to stroke, heart attack, and kidney failure.

Keep your blood pressure in a healthy range with a healthy low-sodium diet, regular exercise, a healthy weight, stress management, limited alcohol, and avoiding cigarette smoke. In between check-ups, be sure to monitor your blood pressure and call your healthcare provider if it is higher than 120/80. Hypertension is called the silent killer because many people do not realize they have it.

### DON'T SMOKE

Twenty-two percent of men and 18% of women smoke regularly—that's 1 out of 5 adults who still light up! We know that smoking damages every part of the body and accounts for 20% of the deaths in the US each year. You hurt your heart when you smoke, as it impacts the entire cardiovascular system. Smoking after bariatric surgery is extra risky because it increases the risk of ulcers. If you smoke, make a decision now to find a quit-smoking program

and stop. Talk to your children about the dangers of smoking. Many adolescents start an oh-so-difficult-to-break smoking habit during these vulnerable years.

### MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

More than two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are overweight. There are lots of factors playing into these numbers: increased calorie intake, increased sedentary time, stress, inadequate sleep, an environment flooded with quick and tasty food, lack of exercise, and the body's determination to hang onto the extra pounds once they are there, just to name a few.

Those extra pounds come with a steep risk to your heart health with the obesity-related conditions of diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Even without these conditions, excess weight strains your heart, lungs, and joints, making an active lifestyle more difficult. If you have had weight loss surgery and overcome the body's drive to retain excess weight, you have taken a major step to reach and maintain a healthy weight and improve your heart health.



### ENGAGE IN REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Only 30% of Americans get at least the minimal recommended amount of exercise—that's 30 minutes a day of brisk walking. Kids need 60 minutes of exercise daily. That small group who have found a way to squeeze regular activity into their daily lives benefit with improved heart health, better moods, less stress, more energy, lower weight, healthier cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure, and more life satisfaction. All of that for a daily walk! What a great investment in your health. Regular exercise is one of the nicest things you can do for yourself to improve the quality of your life.

You know what to do. Make a commitment, get out there and do it. No excuses.

### EAT A HEALTHY DIET

Walk into your local grocery store with the perspective of a person visiting from another country—it doesn't even have to be a third-world country. It will hit you quickly as you see the mounds of fresh produce stacked up. We live in the land of plenty. We are so blessed. With all of the fresh, wholesome food available to us, why don't we make better food choices? It may be that we are distracted with our busyness and don't take the time to purchase and prepare healthful foods. Not-so-healthy foods have a certain taste appeal. Green beans can be a hard sell next to French fries. Convenience foods are so convenient—they take no time, no effort and are pretty darn cheap. Our poor eating habits, though, however convenient, are not serving us well.

Choose to eat a heart-healthy diet, low in saturated and trans fat, cholesterol, sodium and added sugars and plentiful in whole grains, low-fat protein sources, and fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables most days. If you have had bariatric surgery, you know to build your diet around low-fat protein sources (lean meat, fish and poultry and low-fat dairy products); add fruits, vegetables, and whole grains foods; and limit foods that are high in fat—a good way to start a heart-healthy diet. Eating oily fish (salmon, trout, and herring) at least twice a week, eating less processed foods, keeping sodium intake to 1500 mg daily and limiting cholesterol, trans fat and saturated fat will enhance your diet.

You are what you eat. Lean, bright, and fresh, or heavy and processed—the choice is yours. Start by making a menu, purchasing foods, packing a lunch for work and eating meals at home at least ½ of the time and build from there.



### TAKE CHARGE OF CHOLESTEROL

High cholesterol levels form plaque on blood vessels that can lead to hypertension, heart attacks and strokes. You can keep your cholesterol levels within a healthy range by eating a diet low in cholesterol, trans fat and saturated fat and high in fiber, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight. Have regular cholesterol screenings and follow your healthcare provider's recommendations if your cholesterol level is too high.



### KEEP BLOOD SUGAR AT HEALTHY LEVELS

Diabetes greatly increases the risk of heart disease, especially when coupled with other risk factors like obesity, hypertension, and high cholesterol levels. To prevent type 2 diabetes, keep your weight within a healthy range, eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly. Even if you have a family history, you can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes by taking those measures. If you have developed type 2 diabetes, work with your doctor to manage your blood sugar levels through diet, exercise, weight management and possibly medications. By keeping blood sugar at healthy levels you can slow long-term complications of diabetes including heart disease.

The take-away is that although heart disease still causes a large amount of disability and death, we can control our risks through the daily lifestyle choices that we make. Bariatric surgery itself improves or resolves most of the risk factors for heart disease: hypertension, obesity, high cholesterol, diabetes. It also enables people to be more physically active.

**Make sure that you are fully engaged in your Life's Simple 7.**



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On Track With Barix

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## RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

To receive a **FREE RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY** guide, call 800-282-0066 or send us an email at [rc@barixclinics.com](mailto:rc@barixclinics.com) with your name and contact information. Our reconstructive surgery program is currently performed at our centers in Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. **Call us today for more information!**

## SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

Tell us about how your life has changed as a result of your weight loss surgery. Your story may be printed in this publication or on one of our websites and can serve as an inspiration to others.

Submit your story online ([http://www.barixclinicsstore.com/share\\_your\\_story.html](http://www.barixclinicsstore.com/share_your_story.html)).

We'd love to hear from you.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT FINANCING YOUR SURGERY?

Call a Barix Patient Service Representative at 800-282-0066

## It Worked for Me

The Barix Forums are about people supporting each other through tough times and WOW moments. No one can quite understand what you are going through like someone who has walked in your shoes. Here is just one example of a posting (edited) that supports the person posting and also inspires others. If you have not checked out the forums, what are you waiting for? Just create an account and find the support you need ([forum.barixclinics.com](http://forum.barixclinics.com)).

### POSTING:

I really hate stress. It really triggers bad habits to return. Been so good and then bam, major stress over a daycare situation.... How have others learned to deal with the stress when you can't go to food in the same way anymore?

### RESPONSE 1

Stress and the issues left over from BEFORE surgery can really hit hard, and it's usually when least expected. I have a therapist and attend 12 step meetings.

### RESPONSE 2:

Eating for stress is kind of simple really. You are going to have stress, right? No matter what we do it is ALWAYS going to be a part of our lives. You can't eliminate the antecedent (cause), so you have to change the response to stress instead. We've talked at our support group about this; here are some ideas:

- *Modify how you respond to stress by exchanging a positive behavior for a negative one (bingeing/poor food choices). Some ideas for healthy things to do in place of eating include going for a walk, taking a bath, knitting, watching a movie, or reading a magazine or book.*
- *Develop a new outlet for stress like exercise (karate kicking, treadmill, walking dog, going for walk/run) to clear your head and expend energy.*

- *Journal to express and release emotions.*
- *Put off eating (the not-so-healthy food) for 20 minutes. Replace it with an activity like cleaning out a closet, drinking tea, etc. After 20 minutes re-analyze your current hunger and need for the food.*
- *What you are doing now? Talking to a support system can also help.*
- *Go to bed earlier! A lack of sleep increases your ghrelin (hunger hormone), reduces your leptin (the hormone that tells you are "full") and increases cortisol (belly fat hormone!).*

### RESPONSE 3

My stress is high and my other hormones are not cooperating so I am off for my second walk today.

### RESPONSE 4

Ministry really helps me de-stress - there are so many others who are so much worse off and by lending a hand and helping them it helps to focus on what is really important and it isn't ice cream and a brownie sundae.

## In the News

Vitamin D may have a role in the development of type 2 diabetes. A study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism found that obese children with lower vitamin D levels were more insulin-resistant. The obese children who skipped breakfast and drank more soda and juice had lower vitamin D levels. (LSG) for the indications listed in the current Bariatric Surgery for the Treatment of Morbid Obesity National Coverage Determination." Public comments were welcome through October 30, 2011.

The agency plans to make a final decision by June 30, 2012 and potentially cover gastric sleeve surgery for those covered by Medicare who qualify.



## Sugar Free Cookies

- 1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 5 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup Splenda
- 1/4 cup Egg Beaters or other fat-free egg substitute
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Combine flour, baking powder, and salt in medium-sized mixing bowl and set aside. In large bowl, beat together butter and Splenda until creamy. Add egg substitute and vanilla extract and stir well. Gradually add flour mixture, stirring continually, until combined, but still somewhat crumbly. Divide dough in half, wrap in plastic wrap and place in refrigerator to chill for at least 90 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Lightly flour counter or other working surface, and place half of dough onto it. Roll out to between 1/8- and 1/4-inches in thickness, then used lightly-floured cookie cutters to cut desired shapes. Gather scraps, and roll out and cut again. Place cut-out dough at least 1 inch apart on lined baking sheet and bake 9-10 minutes or until edges turn golden. Repeat the rolling and cutting process with the second half of dough. Let baked cookies sit 1 minute on baking sheet, then move to wire racks to cool. Makes 20 servings.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING:** 65 calories, 1 gram protein, 2 grams fat, 8 grams carbohydrate, 191 calories.



## Yogurt Cheesecake

- 4 containers Kroger CarbMaster vanilla yogurt
- 8 oz cream cheese, fat-free, softened
- 3 cups pineapple juice, unsweetened
- 1 pint strawberries, sliced

Blend together yogurt and cream cheese. Spoon into 8 clear glasses or small bowls. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Top with sliced strawberries and drizzle with pineapple juice before serving. Makes 8 servings.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING:** 123 calories, 9 grams protein, 1 gram fat, 16 grams carbohydrate, 250 mg sodium.



## REWARD YOURSELF



This month, you could earn a SPECIAL GIFT for your "It Worked For Me" tips or recipes! Just submit as many recipes and "It Worked For Me" tips as you like. The most original and creative will be awarded a special gift from our online store. Include your name and contact info with your entry—make sure your recipes follow Barix nutritional guidelines.

Tips must be submitted by February 29, 2012. Please send comments, ideas, recipes and "It Worked For Me" tips to Deb Hart, RD, LD at [dhart@foresthealth.com](mailto:dhart@foresthealth.com).