

ACTS OF SELF-LOVE

February's American Heart Month is a great time to remember that heart disease (the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S.) can often be prevented when we make healthy choices and manage our health conditions. Here are five simple acts of self-love to give yourself a healthier heart this year:

- 1. Don't be so salty.** Choose low- or no-sodium foods when available. Flavor foods with herbs and spices instead of salt.
- 2. Lessen saturated fats.** Cut down on these foods high in saturated fat: fatty cuts of meat, poultry with skin, full-fat dairy, butter, lard, and coconut and palm oils.
- 3. Get your heart beating faster.** Aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking or stairs during a rest or lunch break, will increase your heart rate and make you use more oxygen. Talk with your doctor before you start a new exercise plan.
- 4. Deal with your stressors.** Stress can contribute to high blood pressure and other cardiovascular risks. Start stressing less by talking with your support system, do deep breathing, stand and stretch, laugh a little, play your favorite music, and visit here4tn.com for free resources.
- 5. Dodge secondhand (and firsthand) smoke.** The risk of developing heart disease is about 25 to 30 percent higher for people who are exposed to secondhand smoke. Aim to avoid exposure to cigarette smoke or quit smoking today. ParTNers for Health members have access to [free tobacco quit aids](#) and ActiveHealth's free quit program. State insurance plan members can enroll in this tobacco cessation program by calling 888-741-3390. Another resource is the [TN Tobacco QuitLine](#), a free service for all Tennesseans.



“Self-care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what’s left of you.”

Katie Reed

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