

Family and Community Health “Connections” in Runnels County

ABCs of Heart Health

Every year, Americans suffer more than 1.5 million heart attacks and strokes. The good news is that you can help reduce your risk and improve your heart health by following the ABCS!

What are the ABCS of heart health?

A: Take aspirin as directed by your health care professional. Ask your health care professional if aspirin can reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Be sure to tell your health care professional if you have a family history of heart disease or stroke, and mention your own medical history.

B: Control your blood pressure. Blood pressure measures the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. If your blood pressure stays high for a long time, you may suffer from high blood pressure (also called hypertension). High blood pressure increases your risk for heart attack or stroke more than any other risk factor. Find out what your blood pressure numbers are, and ask your health care professional what those numbers mean for your health. If you have high blood pressure, work with your health care professional to lower it.

C: Manage your cholesterol. Cholesterol is a waxy substance produced by the liver and found in certain foods. Your body needs cholesterol, but when you have too much, it can build up in your arteries and cause heart disease.

There are different types of cholesterol: One type is “good” and can protect you from heart disease, but another type is “bad” and can increase your risk. Talk to your health care professional about cholesterol and how to lower your bad cholesterol if it’s too high.

S: Don’t smoke. Smoking raises your blood pressure, which increases your risk for heart attack and stroke. If you smoke, quit. Talk with your health care professional about ways to help you stick with your decision. Visit smokefree.gov or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW

What do I need to know about high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is the leading cause of heart attack and stroke in the United States. It can also damage your eyes and kidneys. One in three American adults has high blood pressure, and only about half of them have it under control.

How is blood pressure measured?

Two numbers (for example, 140/90) help determine blood pressure.

The first number measures systolic pressure, which is the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart beats.

The second number measures diastolic pressure, which is the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart rests between beats.

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Talk to your health care team about the ABCS



Aspirin when appropriate



Blood pressure control



Cholesterol management



Smoking cessation



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ABCs of Heart Health, cont.

When and how should I take my blood pressure?

Take your blood pressure regularly, even if you feel fine. Generally, people with high blood pressure have no symptoms.

You can take your blood pressure at home, at many pharmacies, and at your doctor's office.

How can I control my blood pressure?

Work with your health care professional to make a plan for controlling your blood pressure. Be sure to follow these guidelines:

Eat a healthy diet.

Choose foods low in trans fat and sodium (salt). Most people in the United States consume more sodium than recommended. Everyone age 2 and up should consume less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. Adults age 51 and older; African Americans of all ages; and people with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should consume even less than that: only 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

Get moving.

Staying physically active will help you control your weight and strengthen your heart.
Try walking for 10 minutes, 3 times a day, 5 days a week.

Take your medications.

If you have high blood pressure, your health care professional may give you blood pressure medicine to help control it. It's important to follow your health care professional's instructions when taking the medication and to keep taking it even if you feel well.

Tell your health care professional if the medicine makes you feel bad. Your health care team can suggest different ways to reduce side effects or recommend another medicine that may have fewer side effects.

Who is part of my health care team?

The doctor is not the only health care professional who can help you follow the ABCS. Nurses, pharmacists, community health workers, health coaches, and other professionals can work with you and your doctor to help you achieve your health goals.

Where can I learn more?

Su Familia: The National Hispanic Family Health Helpline
The National Alliance for Hispanic Health offers free, reliable information on a wide range of health issues in Spanish and English. The health promotion advisors can help Hispanic clients find affordable health care services in their community. Need confidential health information? Call the Su Familia Helpline at 1-866-783-2645 today.

Source: <https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/data-reports/factsheets/ABCS.html>





Start simple with MyPlate



Be Salt Smart

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Read the label

The **Nutrition Facts** label shows you how much sodium is in packaged foods. Choose lower sodium foods—especially if you have high blood pressure, diabetes, or kidney disease.



Eat fruits and veggies

Enjoy a variety of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables—almost all of them are naturally low in sodium. Look for canned vegetables labeled “no added salt.”



Look for cue words

Items that are “pickled,” “brined,” or “cured” tend to be high in sodium. Include these foods in your meals sparingly.



Put together meals at home

Making your own meals gives you more control over the salt you eat. Taste your food before adding salt from the shaker.



Go easy on the sauce

Be mindful of how much sauce, gravy, salsa, ketchup, soy sauce, marinade, or dressing you're using. The sodium from these can add up quickly.



Spice it up

Flavor your foods with fresh or dried herbs and spices instead of salt. Pick spice blends that do not list salt or sodium on the ingredients list.



Go to [MyPlate.gov](https://www.mypplate.gov) for more information.
USDA is an equal opportunity provider,
employer, and lender.

**The benefits of healthy eating
add up over time, bite by bite.**

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Kandice Everitt, CEA-FCH
608 Sealy Ave, Ballinger, TX 76821
325-365-2219
Kandice.everitt@ag.tamu.edu
Website: runnels.agrilife.org
Facebook: @runnlescountyfch



Family & Community Health "Connections" is provided by these Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family and Community Health Agents:

Courtney Parrott, Brown County
Kailey Roberts, Burnet County
Milissa Wright, Concho Valley
Chanie Schaffner, Coleman County
Kelli Maberry, Jones County
Karen DeZarn, Lampasas County
Whitney Whitworth, Llano County
Jessica Holbrook, Mason County
Carrie Ross, McCulloch County
Staci Winders, Nolan County
Kandice Everitt, Runnels County
McKinley Armstrong, San Saba County
Kim Miles, Taylor County
Courtney Redman, Tom Green County
Barbara Brown BLT Regional Project Specialist
Stacy Drury, D7 Regional FCH Program Leader

Pork Tenderloin with Cayenne Cherry Sauce

Ingredients

- 1 pound pork tenderloin
- 1/4 cup cherry preserves
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 cup shallots chopped
- 1 cup dark cherries fresh or frozen pitted
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper



Directions

1. Wash your hands and clean your preparation area
2. Preheat oven to 250 degrees
3. Mix the preserves, balsamic vinegar, and allspice in a small bowl. Reserve half of the mixture.
4. Brush 1/2 of the mixture on the pork tenderloin, covering the entire tenderloin.
5. Cover and cook the tenderloin for 45-50 minutes, or until a food thermometer reaches 145 degrees F.
6. While the tenderloin is cooking, heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and sauté for 1-2 minutes or until tender. Add the cherries, cayenne, and the reserved preserve mixture. Let simmer for 8-10 minutes or until sauce has thickened.
7. Using an immersion blender, food processor, or regular blender, blend the dark cherry sauce until it is smooth. Be careful with the hot liquid.
8. Slice the tenderloin and spoon the dark cherry sauce over the top. Enjoy!

Yields: 4 Servings

Source: <https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/pork-tenderloin-cayenne-cherry-sauce/>