

# HEARTwise

NEWS TO HELP YOU LIVE A HEART-HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

## Getting the Most Out of Cardiac Rehab



**C**ardiac rehabilitation can be life-saving. One study, for example, found that heart attack survivors who participated in cardiac rehab programs lived longer. Cardiac rehabilitation participation can reduce the chance of death by 26 percent for heart patients.

Are you concerned with the quality as well as the quantity of your days? Here, too, these programs can offer an edge. Research credits cardiac rehab with improving exercise capacity, allowing people to climb stairs and carry groceries again, and enhancing a sense of well-being.

### Who Benefits?

Cardiac rehab can help many different types of patients avoid future cardiovascular problems. These include heart attack survivors; people with chronic stable angina, heart failure, or congenital cardiovascular disease; patients who have had angioplasty or stents, bypass surgery, or transplantation; and pacemaker recipients.

### What Does Cardiac Rehab Involve?

Exercise is key, but cardiac rehabilitation is about more than exercise. Most programs also emphasize practicing an overall healthy lifestyle to cut the risk of future heart problems. In addition to exercise training, a typical cardiac rehab program might include:

- ▶ Stress reduction techniques, such as relaxation training and/or deep breathing
- ▶ Healthy coping skills for dealing with depression, anxiety or anger; and treatment if necessary
- ▶ Education on practical ways to manage your individual risk factors, including diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking and obesity
- ▶ A physical examination and detailed evaluation of your health history

### How Can I Maximize My Benefits?

These heart-healthy strategies can help

make your rehab program most effective:

- ▶ Turn exercise into a daily habit. Take the stairs instead of the escalator. Park at the far end of the parking lot.
- ▶ Concentrate on what you can eat. Heart-healthy foods include lean meats, whole-grain products, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds, and low- or nonfat dairy products. Ask your dietitian for tasty ways to prepare these foods.
- ▶ Keep track. Using a diary to record your exercise and eating habits could help you stick with healthy changes.
- ▶ Stay positive. Don't ignore depression or anxiety. Ask for help.
- ▶ Get support. For example, support groups can help you quit smoking or lose weight. 🐶

**Heart Programs Relocating**  
See page 3

### Inside This Issue

Health, By the Numbers



A Sweet Treat  
for Your Valentine



Healthy Tips for Dining Out



Taking Women's  
Special Needs to Heart

# Calculating Your Heart Health by the Numbers

In recent years, fewer American women have died of heart disease. Still, it remains women's number one killer. You can help keep your own heart health in check by knowing these numbers:

- ▶ **Blood pressure.** Your blood pressure should stay below 120/80. A systolic or top number from 120 to 139, or a diastolic or bottom number from 80 to 89, signals borderline high blood pressure, or pre-hypertension. You have hypertension if your top number reaches 140 or your bottom number equals 90.
- ▶ **BMI.** Your BMI, or body mass index, compares your weight with your height. A BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 means your weight is normal. You're overweight if your BMI is between 25 and 29.9, and obese if it tops 30. Being overweight or obese increases your risk for heart disease. To learn your BMI, access the BMI calculator at [www.meriter.com/healthy](http://www.meriter.com/healthy) (Click on

"Calculators" under "Interactive Tools.")

- ▶ **Waist size.** In addition to weight, the amount of fat you carry around your belly also can endanger your heart. So, keep your waist size below 35 inches.
- ▶ **Cholesterol.** Your LDL, or bad cholesterol, count should be less than 100 milligrams (mg) per deciliter (dL), while your HDL, or good cholesterol, should exceed 50 mg/dL. Triglyceride, another component of total cholesterol, should be less than 150 mg/dL.
- ▶ **Glucose.** High blood sugar levels suggest diabetes, another heart risk. Diabetes testing is recommended for all women at age 45, especially if they are overweight. Other risk factors, such as a family history of diabetes, personal history of gestational diabetes or hypertension may prompt earlier testing. On a random blood test, glucose levels should be less than 200 mg/dL. If you fast for eight hours before a test, they should be less than 100. 🍷

## HEART-HEALTH | tip

### A SWEET WAY TO LOWER HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

There's hardly any problem chocolate can't solve. And that may include high blood pressure. In one small study, adults who ate about 3.5 ounces of dark chocolate daily for 15 days lowered their high blood pressure. They also saw their total and bad cholesterol levels drop. Of course, the fat and calories in chocolate mean it's still best to enjoy it sparingly.

*Hypertension, Vol. 46, No. 2*

heart-healthy recipe:

Serves four

## Be My Valentine Berry Tarts

### Ingredients

2 whole graham crackers (4 squares)  
4 oz. fat-free cream cheese, softened  
2 tbsp. fat-free sour cream  
½ tsp. vanilla

1 tbsp. powdered (confectioner's) sugar  
2 cups raspberries or strawberries  
4 paper muffin cups

### Directions

1. Finely crush graham crackers and divide crumbs among four muffin cups. A muffin tray will help you shape them correctly.
2. In a small bowl, mix cream cheese, sour cream, vanilla and confectioner's sugar with a whisk to make no-cook pastry cream.
3. Put mixture on top of graham cracker crumbs. Top with berries. You can save some berries to decorate the plate.
4. Refrigerate for at least two hours before serving.

### Nutrition Facts

Each tart contains about 105 calories, 1 gram fat, 6 mg cholesterol, 250 mg sodium, 3 grams fiber, 18 grams carbohydrate, 5 grams protein.



# News from Meriter

## Two Heart Programs Move to West Beltline Site

### Meriter Heart and Wellness Center

Meriter Heart and Wellness Center, formerly known as the Center for Health Promotion, has relocated to Arbor Gate, Suite 207, 2501 West Beltline Highway.

This new, state-of-the-art facility allows Meriter to expand its outpatient services for cardiovascular and pulmonary rehabilitation patients. Continuing services include cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, supervised exercise therapy (SET), and community and regional education and screening. New programs include Phase III (a maintenance exercise program for cardiac and pulmonary patients), weight management and circuit exercise. Find out more by calling (608) 417-6102 or visiting [www.meriter.com/heartwellness](http://www.meriter.com/heartwellness).

### Wisconsin Heart & Vascular Institute

Wisconsin Heart & Vascular Institute has relocated its Madison clinic from the Meriter campus to the Arbor Gate location, which is easily accessible from the central Beltline at the Todd Drive exit. All regular cardiovascular exams and tests are performed at the new clinic. Wisconsin Heart and Vascular Institute physicians will continue to provide services at the Meriter Heart Hospital, where several

of the physicians hold medical directorships. Call (608) 260-2100 or visit [www.wiheart.com](http://www.wiheart.com) to learn more.

## New Oncology Unit Offers Patient-Focused Design

Meriter Hospital has opened its new, state-of-the-art Oncology Unit. The unit's patient-focused design offers:

- ▶ 15 private inpatient rooms, each including a bath with a shower and sleeper sofa for a family member or friend
- ▶ An air-flow handling system designed specifically for infection control
- ▶ Expanded outpatient treatment area
- ▶ More space for family members to be part of the care experience
- ▶ A family lounge, resource library and consultation rooms

Meriter Foundation played a major role in financing the \$5 million unit. The Foundation's priority focus for 2008 was to improve the care environment for cancer patients and their families.

"Cancer is a disease that touches so many in our community," says Meriter Foundation President Fran Petonic. "The Foundation was pleased to be a part of this very important project that will help to greatly improve the quality of life for those living with cancer in our area. We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped make this unit a reality."

## Eat Heart-Smart When Dining Out

It's one thing to eat a heart-healthy diet when you're home. But it can be more challenging when you're at a restaurant. Here are some tips that may help:



- ▶ Opt for dishes that are designated heart-healthy, low-fat or light. Today, many restaurants make a point of highlighting these healthy items on the menu.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to ask how dishes are prepared and if they can be prepared differently. Many restaurants will honor requests to serve foods the way you prefer. For example, ask to have fish grilled without butter or oil.
- ▶ Ask for dressing, sauces and gravy on the side, so you can use them sparingly. And ask your server if low-fat salad dressings are available.
- ▶ Avoid deep-fried foods. Instead, opt for foods that are broiled, baked, grilled, roasted, steamed, poached, lightly sautéed or stir-fried.
- ▶ If you order poultry or meat, trim off all the visible fat.
- ▶ Eat the same amount of food you would if you were at home. If the restaurant meal includes larger portions, set some of it aside and take it home.
- ▶ Choose pasta with tomato-based rather than cream-based sauces.
- ▶ Order entrées with vegetables as key ingredients.

## THERE'S MORE FOR YOU AT MERITER.COM!

[www.meriter.com/fastcare](http://www.meriter.com/fastcare)—Learn about Meriter Fast Care Clinics, a convenient and economical treatment option for people suffering from common ailments.

[www.meriter.com/quitsmoking](http://www.meriter.com/quitsmoking)—Get tips on different strategies to quit smoking—for good. Also, find out about teens and smoking and the hazards of smoking during pregnancy.

[www.meriterhearthospital.com](http://www.meriterhearthospital.com)—Find out the early signs of a heart attack and what to do if you think you're having one.



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conditions at [www.meriterhearthospital.com](http://www.meriterhearthospital.com).



## Cardiovascular Care: Among the Best

Meriter Heart Hospital is proud of its affiliations with a prestigious group of cardiologists, cardiovascular surgeons and affiliated staff members who provide all aspects of cardiovascular care. Physician group providers include:

- ▶ Meriter Medical Group  
[www.meriterhearthospital.com](http://www.meriterhearthospital.com)
- ▶ Wisconsin Heart and Vascular Institute  
[www.wiheart.com](http://www.wiheart.com)
- ▶ UW Health Heart and Vascular Care  
[www.uwhealth.org/heartandvascular](http://www.uwhealth.org/heartandvascular)
- ▶ Associated Physicians, LLP  
[www.apmadison.com](http://www.apmadison.com)

For a complete list of physicians who practice at Meriter, please visit [www.meriter.com/doctors](http://www.meriter.com/doctors).

**C**ardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease and stroke, is the leading health threat to American women. But too many women don't know their potential risk nor do they show typical signs if there is a problem.

Recognizing the importance of addressing this major health issue, Meriter Heart Hospital will soon open the Women's Heart Center.

This new program is designed for women who want to learn more about self-management of the disease and its risk factors to prevent future heart events. The program includes risk assessment, screening, individual evaluation, a personalized

lifestyle intervention plan and education. The Heart Center is coordinated by Adult Nurse Practitioner Jane Nelson Worel, who has 10 years' experience in preventive cardiology, including management of overweight and obesity, dyslipidemia, hypertension, metabolic syndrome and diabetes mellitus. She will provide patient consultations through the Women's Heart Clinic together with cardiac nurses, dietitians and exercise physiologists.

"The Women's Heart Center focuses on helping women enjoy active, heart-healthy lives," says Worel. "Our specialists have the knowledge and experience to provide services tailored to each woman's needs." 🌟

