

Living a Life Free From Cardiovascular Disease Needs to Begin in Childhood

Developing cardiovascular disease begins in childhood!

Some people are born with it – *Congenital heart defects*

Congenital heart defects are a form of cardiovascular disease that is present at birth. Each year, about 32,000 babies are expected to be born with a heart defect.

Many children born with heart defects are living longer, healthier lives because of new treatments that were not available even 10 years ago.

Most people develop risk – *Alarming trends*

Although some children are born with heart problems, many others who are born healthy can develop cardiovascular disease because they have poor lifestyle habits when they are young and as they get older. If you make unhealthy food choices, use tobacco or smoke and don't get enough exercise every day, there's a greater chance that you will develop CVD.

FACTS:

- Children who have CVD risk factors at age 13 or younger can develop heart disease as young adults.
- Children who have CVD risk factors in their early teens may have hardened arteries that look like the arteries of adults many years older.

Following Life's Simple 7 can help you live a life free of CVD!

Making small changes in your life can add up to a big difference in your cardiovascular health, even for children and teenagers! If you're born with a heart problem, these seven steps can help you live a healthier life, too.

1. Avoid smoking and using tobacco products



5. Keep your blood pressure healthy



2. Be physically active every day



6. Keep your total cholesterol healthy



3. Eat a heart-healthy diet



7. Keep your blood sugar healthy



4. Keep a healthy weight



It all begins with making the decision to follow **Life's Simple 7!**

