FALL 2026

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A Newsletter for AvMed Members

YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH HEART FAILURE



Top tips to prevent blood clots when traveling

Planning a getaway? Don't forget to plan for your health, too. These simple tips may help support healthy blood flow and lower the risk of blood clots while traveling.

Get up and move

If you're flying, try to walk around the cabin every hour or two when it's safe to do so. On road trips, stop regularly to stretch and take a short walk.

Try seated exercises

Sometimes getting up isn't an option. While sitting, try simple exercises like pointing and flexing your feet, rolling your ankles, or tightening and relaxing your calf muscles.

Stay hydrated

Sip water throughout the flight. Staying hydrated can reduce dryness-related effects of flying. Be sure to follow any fluid recommendations from your physician.

Dress comfortably

Choose loose-fitting clothing and shoes that make it easy to stay active. Some people may also benefit from compression socks. Your physician can help you decide if wearing compression socks will be beneficial for you.

Know the signs

Signs of a blood clot in the leg may include swelling, pain, tenderness, warmth, or changes in skin color. If a clot travels to the lungs, it can cause sudden shortness of breath, chest pain, or trouble breathing. Seek medical attention right away if you notice these symptoms.



Heart-friendly seasonal swaps: Low-salt edition

Stuffing. Mashed potatoes. Gravy. Ham. Other than being delicious, many seasonal dishes have something else in common: They can be high in sodium. Here's what to do:

When you're living with CHF, it's important to pay attention to how much salt you eat. That's because too much can increase your fluid levels.

But living a low-salt life doesn't have to mean parting with your favorite foods. With a few simple swaps, you can enjoy the holiday dishes you love while staying on track with your heart-health goals.

Switch up your stuffing

Boxed stuffing can pack a surprising amount of salt. Try using less of the seasoning packet and adding flavor with celery, onions, apples, sage, rosemary, or thyme.

Rethink the holiday ham

Because it's cured, ham is often one of the highest-sodium foods on the table. Fresh turkey or chicken is typically a lower-sodium choice. If ham is part of your celebration, enjoy a smaller portion and pair it with lower-sodium sides.

Give gravy and mashed potatoes a makeover

Look for reduced-sodium gravy products or use low-sodium broth in homemade recipes. Fresh potatoes are often lower in sodium than boxed varieties and can be flavored with garlic, herbs, or black pepper.

Give herbs and spices a try

Fresh herbs can be especially useful during the holiday season. Sage pairs well with stuffing, rosemary complements poultry and potatoes, and thyme can add flavor to everything from vegetables to gravy.

Keep vegetable sides simple

When buying frozen veggies, look for options without added sauces or seasonings. For canned options, check the label for "no salt added."

To reach a Case Manager
Simply call 1-833-609-0735, email DM@AvMed.org or scan the QR code provided.

Make the most of your daily walk



Put a little pep in your step with these expert-approved tips for turning an ordinary walk into a feel-good fitness routine.

You don't need a gym membership or fancy equipment to get moving. In fact, walking is one of the easiest ways to work toward the recommended 150 minutes of weekly exercise.

"If you can't make it around the block just yet, walking can be a way of building up strength and fitness," says Michele Stanten, a fitness consultant at Harvard Health Publishing and author of *Walk Off Weight*.

Ready to get moving? Talk with your physician first, then try these pro tips from Stanten.

Start small

The most important thing is to get into a habit and be consistent, Stanten explains. Start with 5 to 10 minutes a day, at a time you can regularly commit to.

Each week, add another five minutes, until you reach 30 minutes.

Focus on good form

Proper form is the secret to transforming an ordinary walk into a workout, Stanten says. Here's what that looks like:

- **Walk tall.** Your shoulders should line up under your ears.
- **Draw your belly muscles up and in.** It helps support your spine as you walk.
- **Step heel-ball-toe.** This pattern helps you stay stable while in motion.
- **Look up.** You want to look about 10 to 15 feet in front of you as you move. This helps you identify and avoid any trip hazards.

Leave the weights at home

Stanten does not believe hand weights are the best way to raise the difficulty of your routine.

Instead, further challenge yourself by speeding up or walking for longer. You'll burn more calories going faster than you will by holding weights, Stanten says.

All in all, walking is a great way to start—and maintain—a fitness routine. If you're not sure where to begin, a good first step is talking with your physician or RN Case Manager.

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