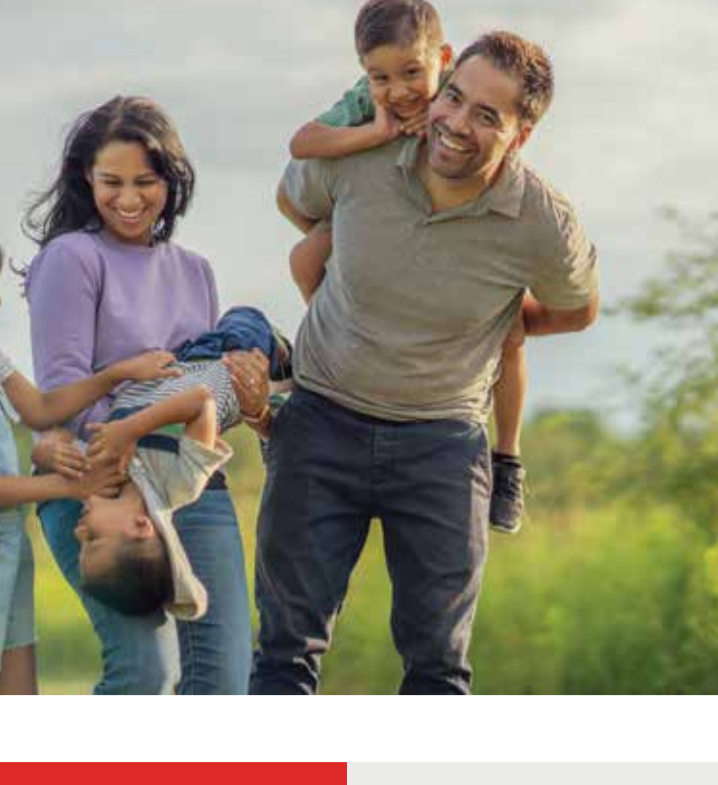


A 5-step plan to help you reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke



Getting started may feel tough, but our 5-step plan can help guide your healthy journey:

- **Ask** yourself the right questions to identify your “why”
- **Find** your focus area and build momentum where it matters most
- **Think** about what you want to achieve and set your goals
- **Plan** ahead to set yourself up for success
- **Commit** to simple, easy to maintain, actions and build lasting habits

1

Identify your “why”

What motivates each of us may be different, but our reasons are equally powerful.

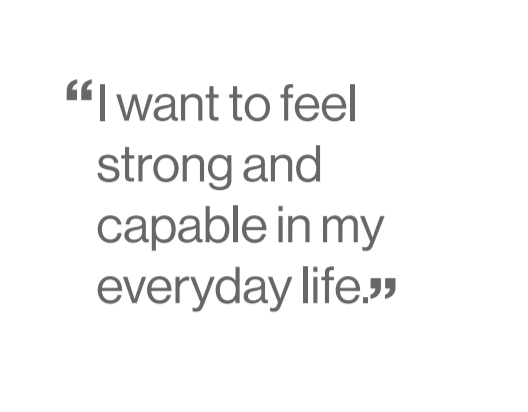
Ground yourself in the reasons for your journey and the outcomes you’re striving for.



“I want to be there for my children and grandchildren as they grow up.”



“I want to travel freely, without worrying about my health.”



“I want to feel strong and capable in my everyday life.”



“I want to avoid the health issues my parents faced.”



“I want us to grow old together and still have fun like when we were young.”



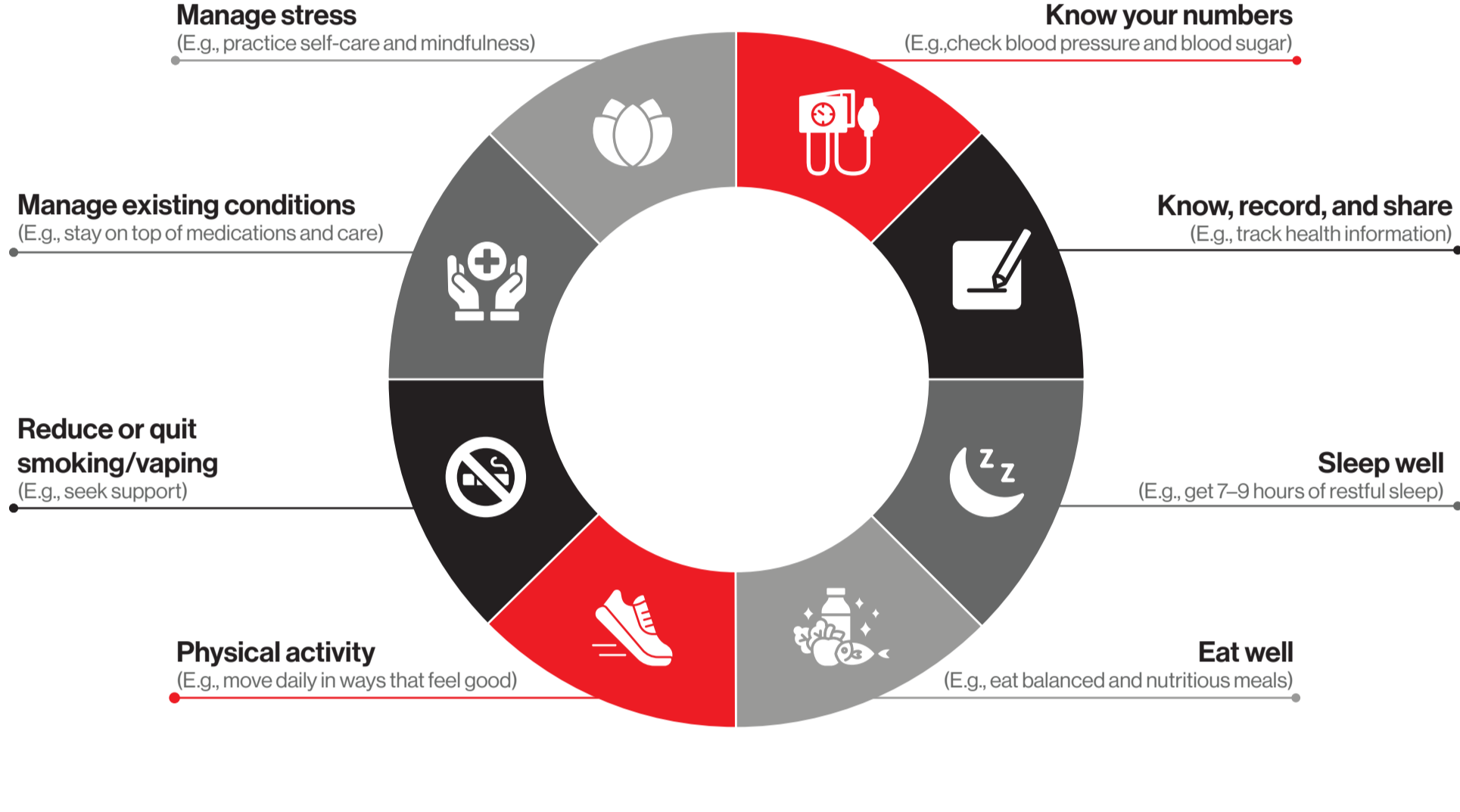
“I want to keep doing the activities I love.”

2

Find your focus

Shine a spotlight on the area that feels easiest to tackle right now, or the one that will have the biggest impact.

You can start by choosing a focus area



If you’re unsure where to start, try asking yourself the following questions

- Which focus area feels most realistic for me to begin with right now?
- Which focus area would make the biggest impact on my health today?
- Which focus area excites or motivates me the most?

Small, achievable steps are easier to stick with.

This could be one specific habit such as quitting smoking.

You're more likely to follow through if it feels meaningful.

3

Set your goals

Choose a goal within your area of focus that feels achievable, allows you to measure success and connects back to what matters most to you.

- 1 Get specific**
What is a clear outcome you want to work toward in your focus area?
- 2 Make it meaningful.**
Why does this goal matter to you and how does it support what you want to achieve?
- 3 Picture your success**
How will you know you’re making progress, and how might you build on it?



1 Get specific

Cook more at home with healthy ingredients.



2 Make it meaningful

Cooking at home helps me feel more in control of my health and may save me money.



3 Picture your success

I'll have more meals I know to make and more energy to do the things I love.

4

Plan ahead

Life can be messy and challenges can come up but that doesn't mean your goal is out of reach.

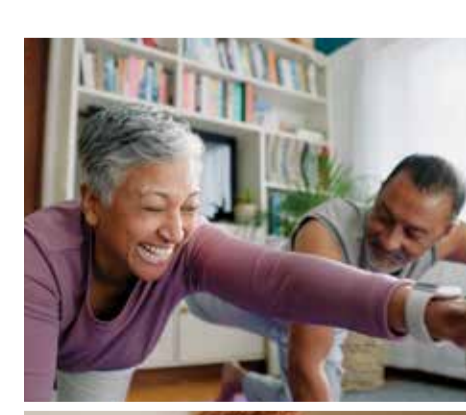
Set yourself up for success with a solid plan.

- Shape your environment and gather what you need.**
E.g., Make your meditation space cozy, download a sleep tracking app, or get a refillable water bottle.
- Line up your supports.**
E.g., Ask a friend to check in with you, or let family know your goal so they can encourage you.
- Expect bumps and plan for them.**
E.g., If you miss a day, decide now how you'll reset without guilt. Have a “plan B” for busy days.
- Get in the right mindset.**
E.g. Be kind to yourself, recognize small wins and keep going.

5

Decide on your first step(s) and commit

Take small actions that move you toward your goal. There's no single right way; whether your goal is big or small, the key is to just get started.



If your focus area is increasing physical activity, your first step may be...

- Adding 10 minutes to your morning dog walk
- Following a 20-minute workout video three times per week



If your focus area is managing your stress, your first step might be...

- Finding a meditation or positive mindset podcast
- Learning breathing techniques to help relieve stress



If your focus area is improving your sleep, your first step might be...

- Going to bed 15-30 minutes earlier each weeknight
- Unplugging from screens 30-60 minutes before bed

Small steps, big impact

Start small with everyday choices that add up to change. Because small steps aren't small at all. They build momentum.

Visit www.heartandstroke.ca to learn more.