HEALTH CONNECTIONS

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTION:
EAT MORE PLANTS!

HEART ATTACK
TIME IS MUSCLE
SPRING CLEAN YOUR
MEDICINE CABINET





SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER?

Does interacting with people make you nervous? Do you always feel self-conscious and afraid of meeting someone new?

There's nothing wrong with being an introvert, but if anxiety is affecting your work or your ability to enjoy life, you could have social anxiety disorder. This condition affects an estimated 7 percent of adults, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Talk to your primary care provider if social settings cause you to experience any of the following:

• nausea

• rapid heart rate

• tense posture

- aversion to conversation or eye contact
- extreme blushing or nervousness
- fear you are being judged
- feeling of panic

It might be difficult to talk about, but seek help. Social anxiety disorder is treatable, and your primary care provider can help you find solutions like talk therapy or medications, so you can more fully enjoy your life.

STRONG to the CORE

Did you know that if you're experiencing lower back pain, it could be because your core muscles need strengthening? Your core consists of your abdominal muscles, back muscles, diaphragm and pelvic floor muscles. Strengthening these muscles will help improve stability in your back, lessening or possibly eliminating pain for many people.

Your doctor or a physical therapist can suggest easy exercises to strengthen your core, like:

- abdominal crunches
- hamstring stretches
- hip flexor stretches
- leg lifts
- planks

Pilates, swimming and yoga are also great and gentle ways to work on your core strength.

TAKE CONTROL OF INCONTINENCE

According to the American Urological Association, almost a third of people in the U.S. suffer from urinary incontinence. But bladder leakage isn't just a medical concern — incontinence can make you feel embarrassed to go places, wear protection or even talk about it. While incontinence is common in older adults, it's not inevitable and can signal serious diseases like Parkinson's or diabetes.

There are four different types of incontinence:

- Stress incontinence, when there is leakage during laughing or coughing. This is the most common type in middle-aged women.
- **Urge incontinence**, when leakage occurs before a person can get to the toilet due to a disease like Alzheimer's or stroke.
- Overflow incontinence, when leakage happens because the bladder won't ever fully empty. This often occurs in men with enlarged prostates.
- Functional incontinence, which normally happens in older people who simply move too slowly to get to a toilet in time.

Discuss any signs of incontinence you are having with your primary care provider (PCP). There are treatments available, and lifestyle changes may also help.



Don't sit on the sidelines because incontinence is holding you back. Your PCP may have some great solutions. Visit MountainWestAnytime.com to find a primary care provider.



When signs of a heart attack appear, the numbers to know are 9-1-1.

Prescription for Partnership

Did you know your primary care provider (PCP) is one of the best friends your heart can have? That's because your PCP will work with you to identify heart disease risk factors within your control and help you manage health conditions that can put you at greater risk for heart disease.

As with all healthy friendships, it's important for your heart and your PCP to stay in touch. To do that, see your PCP for an annual physical exam. During this appointment, your PCP will:

- check key indicators of health, including your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and adjust your plans (if needed) to control related conditions, like high blood pressure and diabetes
- recommend ways to reduce heart disease risk factors within your control, which may include quitting smoking, eating healthier or exercising regularly

The warning signs of a heart attack are like the starting flag of a race. The only contestants are your heart and time — the longer you wait to seek help, the more damage your heart muscle may suffer. That's why it's important to call 9-1-1 as soon as symptoms appear. Don't think driving yourself will save time: Transport to the emergency room by ambulance can be up to an hour faster than by car, according to the American Heart Association (AHA).

To put time on your side, recognize signs of a heart attack, including:

- chest pain or pressure
- cold sweat
- lightheadedness
- nausea

- shortness of breath
- upper body discomfort, especially in the arms, back or jaw
- vomiting

(More) Help Wanted:
Fewer than 40 percent
of people who experience
cardiac arrest in nonhospital
settings receive CPR from
a bystander, according
to the American
Heart Association.

YOU TO THE RESCUE

If you see someone experiencing heart attack symptoms, you can help. First, call 9-1-1. Second, use an automated external defibrillator (AED), if one is available.

An AED can deliver an electric shock to restart the heart during cardiac arrest. To use an AED, attach its pads to the person's bare chest — wipe his or her chest dry first, if needed — plug in the connector and clear. Push the "analyze" button. If the machine determines a shock is necessary, push the "shock" button. Perform CPR after the shock, if no shock is necessary or if an AED is unavailable.

In 2020, the AHA updated its CPR guidelines. The fundamentals remained the same — to perform hands-only CPR, a bystander should place both hands in the center of the person's chest and press firmly and rapidly. Think of the beat from the Bee Gees' song "Stayin' Alive" for a good compression cadence. The new guidelines are a reminder of bystander CPR's importance — it can be lifesaving, but far too many people don't receive this assistance when they need it.

Chest pain can be a sign of something life-threatening. It's best to call 9-1-1 when having signs of a heart attack. Mountain West Ambulance can be there quickly and efficiently. Don't delay!

We work diligently to have you initially seen by a medical professional within 30 minutes of your arrival in the ER.



Heart Health in Your Hands

Coronary heart disease causes most cases of angina, and the two share many risk factors. Work with your primary care provider to manage heart health by focusing on the risk factors in your control:

- Chronic medical conditions. Controlling Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and unhealthy cholesterol levels can reduce your heart disease risk.
- Diet. Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean sources of protein.
 Limit consumption of processed foods and foods high in sodium, sugar, and saturated and trans fats.
- Drinking. Women should have no more than one alcoholic drink per day and men no more than two, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Exercise. The American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity five days per week.
- Smoking. When you quit smoking, the risk for plaque buildup in your arteries and your overall heart disease risk decline.



Plaque that narrows or blocks one of the heart's arteries robs the muscle of some of the oxygenrich blood it needs to function properly. When that happens, the heart may issue a warning in the form of angina, which is chest pain or pressure. This discomfort isn't always confined to the chest — some people also experience it in the back, arms or elsewhere in the upper body.

STABLE, UNSTABLE OR VARIANT?

Chest pain is a medical emergency — if you experience it, the safest thing to do is go to the nearest emergency room to find out the cause. Not all chest pain is a sign of angina. Angina treatment depends on which of the three main types is present. They include:

- **Stable angina.** The most common type of angina, stable angina occurs when the heart needs more oxygen than usual, like during exercise. Rest and nitroglycerin tablets can reduce symptoms.
- **Unstable angina.** Unstable angina unpredictable chest pain that typically occurs during rest can be a sign of a heart attack and needs emergency care. A physician may perform a cardiac catheterization to find and treat blockages in the heart arteries.
- **Variant angina.** A rare condition, variant angina occurs when spasms affect the coronary arteries, often during rest. A physician may prescribe medications to manage the spasms.

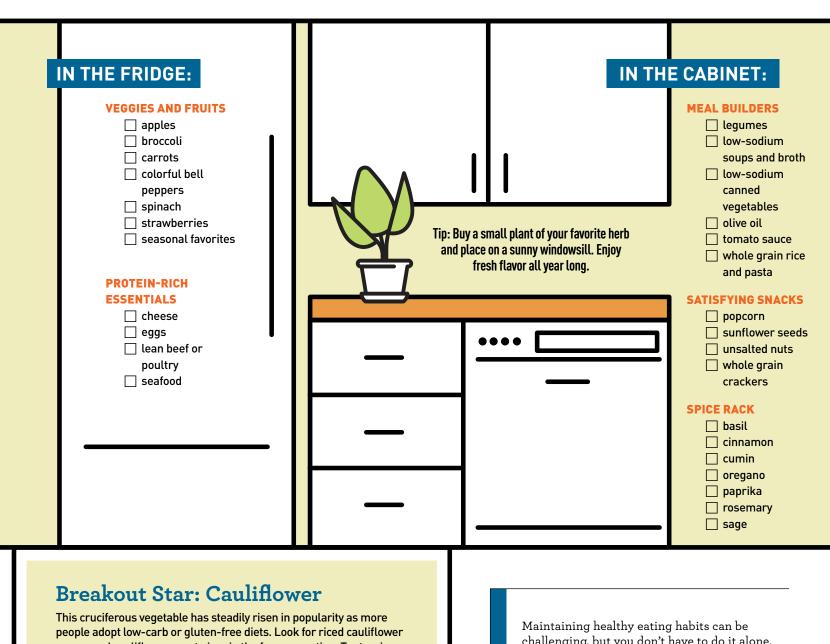
If your heart uses chest pain to send a message, be sure to listen.

If you experience sudden chest pain, call 9-1-1 to rule out heart attack. For further assessment of angina, call (435) 843-2725 to make an appointment with a cardiologist at the University of Utah Specialty Clinic.

We work diligently to have you initially seen by a medical professional within 30 minutes of your arrival in the ER. Patient results may vary. Consult your doctor about the benefits and risks of any surgical procedure or treatment.

W Healthy Pantry Checklist

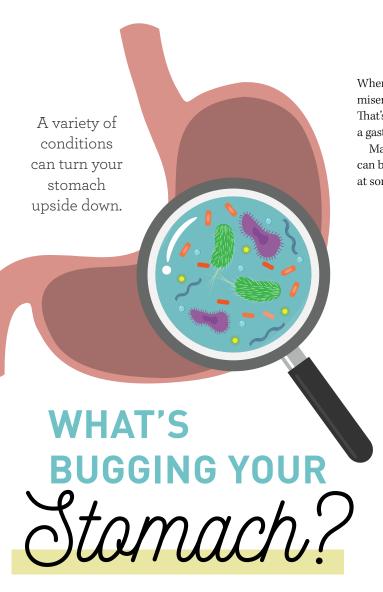
Your fridge and pantry should inspire you to eat healthy, not break your diet. Set yourself up for success by keeping these items on hand for healthier, well-rounded meals.



This cruciferous vegetable has steadily risen in popularity as more people adopt low-carb or gluten-free diets. Look for riced cauliflower and cauliflower crust pizza in the freezer section. Try tossing cauliflower florets in olive oil and your favorite spices, and roast on a parchment lined cookie sheet for 15 to 20 minutes in a 425 F oven

On the rise: Plant-based milk options are also expanding quickly. Look for oat, almond, coconut and rice varieties.

Maintaining healthy eating habits can be challenging, but you don't have to do it alone. Your primary care provider (PCP) can help you connect with a registered dietitian for guidance along your journey. Find a PCP at MountainWestAnytime.com.



When your stomach is upset, cramps, diarrhea and other symptoms can make life miserable. The first step toward finding relief is identifying the cause of the symptoms. That's why it's important to see your primary care provider (PCP), who may refer you to a gastroenterologist if further investigation of symptoms is needed.

Many stomach conditions cause similar symptoms, and distinguishing between them can be tricky — another reason why seeking medical help early is key. Let's take a look at some common causes of upset stomach:

- **Food poisoning.** Eating food contaminated by a virus or bacterium can cause a wide range of symptoms, depending on the germ. Beginning hours or even days after eating a contaminated food, you may develop a fever or experience stomach cramps, vomiting, nausea and diarrhea. Dehydration is a threat, so be sure to drink plenty of fluids.
- Food sensitivity. Food allergies, which can produce dangerous symptoms, like difficulty breathing, are different from food sensitivities. A food sensitivity can cause stomach pain, rashes and other uncomfortable symptoms but is less threatening than an allergic reaction. It can be difficult to pinpoint the object of a food sensitivity. One way is to avoid suspected trigger foods for a few weeks and then slowly reintroduce them to see if they cause a reaction.
- Gastroenteritis. Often called a stomach bug or stomach virus or, incorrectly, stomach flu gastroenteritis occurs when a virus causes inflammation of the stomach lining. Gastroenteritis symptoms include fever, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, stomach pain, headache and body aches. This condition often clears up on its own. If you experience symptoms of gastroenteritis, drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated and eat mild foods (see "Bland Together" below).

Your primary care provider can help you ease stomach symptoms and address potential causes. To find a provider, visit MountainWestAnytime.com.

Bland Together

You may not feel like eating anything when your stomach is upset, but your body still needs fuel. For nourishment that won't send your stomach (further) into a tailspin and, in some cases, may help calm it, it's difficult to beat the BRAT diet.

BRAT stands for bananas, rice, applesauce and toast — bland foods that won't worsen diarrhea or vomiting. How does the BRAT diet help you weather a stomach illness? According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, the diet's mild, low-fiber foods lead to firmer stools — that's good news if you've been experiencing diarrhea — while helping the body withstand the loss of nutrients from diarrhea and vomiting.

See your primary care provider or a gastroenterologist for stomach symptoms and follow his or her recommendations for what to eat, which may include foods on the BRAT diet. As you start to feel better, slowly reintroduce other foods.

Different from a food allergy or food sensitivity, food intolerance is when your body can't digest a certain substance in food, such as the sugar lactose in dairy products or gluten in certain grains like wheat.

According to the National Safety Council, exercise caused over 468,000 sports injuries in 2019. That's with or without exercise equipment, and doesn't include bicycle injuries or injuries from sports like football or soccer. Injuries were most common in people aged 25 to 64.

WARM UP
TO MORE
ACTIVITY



If you're trying to get more exercise in your life, take it slow to limit your risk for injury.

Maybe you've made a New Year's resolution to get back in shape. Or maybe the promise of warmer weather has you wanting to just go outside and walk around your neighborhood. But if you've been slacking on exercise all winter — or all pandemic — quickly jumping back into a workout routine could set you up for injury.

START SLOW

You may already know to stretch your arms, legs and back before you exercise, but it's also important to start slow once you get moving.

Most physicians recommend getting a minimum of 150 minutes of brisk exercise every week. That's 30 minutes, five days a week. If you haven't exercised regularly in a while, don't jump back into a high-impact cardio routine.

The American College of Sports Medicine suggests starting with just a 10-minute walk every day. Add five minutes to that walk every two to four weeks, depending on your strength level. Once you have built up to a 30-minute walk, try mixing in short jogs, bicycle rides or scheduled exercise classes at a gym.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Easing back into regular exercise can help prevent injuries. But if you know you have joint pain or another health condition that could worsen with exercise, it's important to talk to a doctor about your new exercise plans. He or she may suggest avoiding certain activities or want to adjust your medications.

If you find it too painful to get back to being active, see Orthopedic Specialist Jake Daynes, D.O. Call (435) 843-3859 to schedule an appointment.

Healing Heel Pain

A sharp pain in your heel could be due to an inflamed ligament that attaches to the heel bone and runs along the sole of your foot. This condition is called plantar fasciitis, and it can be incredibly painful.

While often confused with bone spurs, plantar fasciitis is not the same thing. It is commonly an overuse injury, but it can also develop from:

- · being overweight
- · having high arches
- having low arches (flat feet)
- · having tight calf muscles
- making poor shoe choices
- running or another repetitive impact activity

The good news is that with treatment and modifications in activity and footwear, most plantar fasciitis will improve within 10 months, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Your orthopedist can diagnose your pain and recommend exercises and other solutions to help reduce inflammation and pain in this important ligament.

Take It or TOSS ITTE

Start spring cleaning by throwing out old, expired and unneeded medications.

Maybe you've changed medications. Maybe you didn't need all of the prescription medicine you were given. But if you've got a cabinet full of pills, cough syrups and assorted supplements, now's a great time to take stock and see what can be tossed out.

CHECK YOUR MEDS

The National Library of Medicine recommends throwing out all expired medications. You should also examine unexpired medications. Throw them out if medicine:

- appears broken
- has changed color, smell or texture
- has softened or hardened
- is sticking together

The best way to prevent unexpired medications from going bad too early is by storing them properly: Keep them in a cool, dry place, away from heat, light or moisture. A cabinet in your bedroom or kitchen may be better than one in the bathroom. Wherever you store medications, make sure they remain out of the reach of curious kids or locked up safely.

SAFE MEDICATION DISPOSAL

If you have unused pain medications or other substances that could be addictive or misused, check for a Drug Enforcement Administration or local police drug take back collection location. If you can't find one nearby, wrap the unused pills in something like a bag of used cat litter or coffee grounds. This will make it harder for kids, animals or thieves to find pills in your trash. The Food and Drug Administration says certain medications, such as those containing opioids, should be flushed down the drain, while others are harmful to the environment. Your doctor or pharmacist should be able to answer your questions about which drugs are safe to flush.

One of the most important conversations to have with your healthcare provider is about the medications you take. If you need a new provider, go to MountainWestAnytime.com and conveniently schedule online.



Did you know, according to a 2014 study in the journal Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy, around two out of three prescription medications go unused? That's over \$2.4 billion in unused medications.

Schedule a Prescription Checkup

If you've been taking the exact same medication for years, it's easy to assume everything's fine. But if you haven't seen your physician for a while, as many of us haven't during the pandemic, it's time to make an appointment for a medication checkup.

Here's what to ask your doctor:

- Do I still need to take this medication? Has my condition improved enough that I no longer need it?
- Should I be at the same dose if I have gained or lost weight since starting it?
- Could any of these medications interact negatively with each other or with any foods or supplements?
- Is there a cheaper generic version of this medication that would work just as well?

If your doctor prescribes you new or different medication, ask about when and how to take it and any side effects you might experience.



If you have sleep apnea, your energy level isn't the only thing that may pay a price. This condition can also place your heart at risk.

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) — the most common type of sleep apnea occurs when throat muscles relax during sleep and block the airway, leading to repeated pauses in breathing. That can cause loud snoring and gasping, and leave you feeling exhausted during the day.

The brief breaks from breathing that occur with OSA cause the body to release stress hormones that can increase heart disease risk over time, according to the American Heart Association. Sleep apnea can increase your risk for high blood pressure, heart failure, heart attack and stroke.

YOUR SLEEP, STUDIED

If you think you might have sleep apnea, it's important to find out for sure — with treatment, sleep apnea-related heart problems don't have to be your destiny. A sleep medicine specialist may want you to undergo a sleep study. There are two main types:

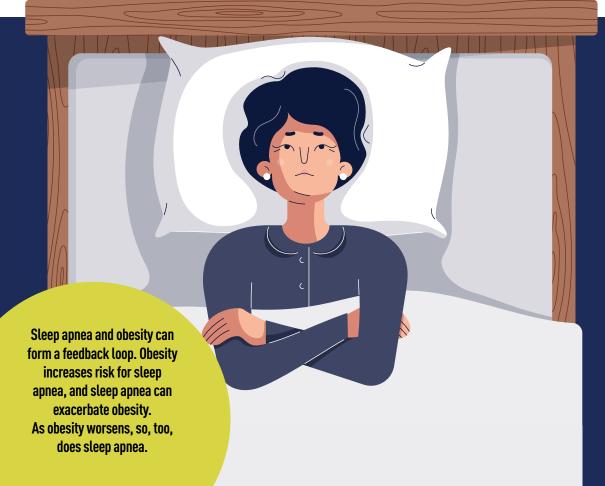
• Home sleep study. As its name suggests, you can perform this test at home by following a sleep technician's instructions. You'll use special equipment to record data about your breathing, heart rate and oxygen levels.

• Lab sleep study. For this type of study, you'll stay overnight at a sleep center, where a technician will monitor you and collect data while you sleep.

Using information from a home or lab sleep study, a sleep medicine specialist can determine whether you have sleep apnea and, if so, how to treat it. Treatments include lifestyle changes such as losing weight, oral or mechanical devices that help keep the airway open, and surgery to make the airway less prone to blockages.

If you are experiencing symptoms of sleep apnea, do your heart a favor and talk to your primary care provider (PCP) for a referral to a specialist. Need a PCP? Visit MountainWestAnytime.com.

Patient results may vary. Consult your doctor about the benefits and risks of any surgical procedure or treatment.



Is Your Sleep on Track?

Many smartwatches and wearable fitness devices track your sleep, allowing you to view information about sleep duration and quality, and how often you woke during the night. That data can provide insight into your sleep and may even lead to greater sleep satisfaction. In a 2020 study, University of Arizona researchers found that individuals who wore a sleep tracker for one week felt their sleep quality was better than it was during the week they didn't wear it.

To evaluate sleep quality or diagnose a sleep disorder, a sleep medicine physician relies on clinically proven information that sleep studies produce, not the data you get from your wearable device. However, sleep app data can be a good starting point for discussing sleep concerns with your physician. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, information from sleep trackers can "enhance the patient-clinician interaction" during clinical evaluations.

Eating a Plant-Based Diet

Ring in the new year with healthy habits like a plant-based diet. Your heart will thank you. The start of a fresh year is the perfect time to tweak your eating habits. While fad diets come and go, you can't go wrong with eating more vegetables. Skip the trendy detox plans and quick fixes and instead resolve to follow a plant-based diet. Not only will you be eating more nutrient-rich foods but also reducing your risk of heart disease — the leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the American Heart Association (AHA). Here's how to follow a plant-based diet and adapt it to your health needs.



GOING PLANT-BASED? Avoid malnutrition and make sure to get enough of these key nutrients.



Calcium: Try soybeans, almonds and dark leafy greens.



Iron: Eat more beans, broccoli, tofu and iron-fortified cereals.



Omega 3s: Try flaxseed meal or oil.



Protein: Include more nuts, seeds, grains, legumes, tofu and soy milk in your diet.



Vitamin B12: Vegetarians can try eggs and dairy products. If vegan, go for fortified soy milk and cereals.



Zinc: Eat more beans, nuts and soy products.

PLANT-BASED APPROACHES

There isn't only one way to follow a plant-based diet. You can strictly avoid animal-derived foods or have some flexibility in your meal plans. Here are some different ways to go plant-based.

flexitarian	pescatarian	plant-forward	vegan
People who follow a	Pescatarians avoid	This is a style of cooking	A vegan diet ex
flexitarian diet stick	red meat and poultry,	that emphasizes plant-	any meat and a
to mostly plant-based	but consume fish	based foods, but is not	derived foods.
foods while occasionally	and shellfish.	limited to them. Meat is	
eating meat.		consumed but never the	
		main feature of the meal	

n diet excludes eat and animal-

Vegetarians avoid eating meat but may eat some animal-derived foods, like eggs, dairy, honey and gelatin.

vegetarian

IS PRO-PLANT PRO-HEALTH?

Some people choose to eat plant-based diets for ethical concerns about the treatment of animals in the food supply and/or the overall impact livestock raised for food has on the planet. However, focusing on the health side, what risks does meat consumption pose to your health?

Red meat, which includes beef, pork and lamb, is high in saturated fat. Excess saturated fat can raise blood cholesterol levels and increase risk of heart disease. The typical meat-focused American diet includes an unhealthy amount of saturated fat: The AHA recommends having no more than 13 grams of saturated fat per day for a 2,000 calorie diet. For perspective, you would reach nearly half your recommended daily limit of saturated fat after eating only 4 ounces of full-fat ground beef.

It doesn't stop with red meat — processed meats can be a worse offender. In one meta-analysis published in Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition, for every 1.75 ounces of processed meats consumed, the risk of heart disease rose 18 percent.

Still, there are healthy meat and fish options. Some researchers stress that lean cuts have fewer harmful fats and provide protein and nutrients that our bodies need. Certain types of fish have omega-3 fatty acids that can reduce the risk of heart failure.

If you are starting a plant-based diet for your health, it may be helpful to try eating plant-forward or pescatarian first and determine if you can still get adequate protein and nutrients without eating meat or dairy.

What do french fries, potato chips and candy have in common? They are all meatless options. Remember that sometimes eating junk food that is technically vegetarian or vegan can give you the false sense of eating healthier. Stick to unprocessed foods and well-rounded meals.

MAKE THE SWITCH

Changing your eating habits is a big goal, especially if you are cutting out a major food group in your diet. It may be easier to stick to your plan if you take it step-by-step, setting smaller goals to consume a more plant-based diet. You can:

- **Divide your plate.** Challenge yourself to fill half your plate with vegetables each meal.
- Plant a mini garden. Backyard gardens give you constant access to fresh produce. Your garden doesn't have to be elaborate. Start with three easy-to-grow vegetables in your area, like cherry tomatoes, green beans and cucumbers.
- Try Meatless Monday. This is simply one day during the week whether it be Monday or not — when you avoid meat to cut back on your overall meat consumption. Add more days as vou adjust.

If you are starting your new year with a new diet, don't forget to share your plans with your primary care provider (PCP) to be sure you are getting the nutrients and vitamins you need. It's easy to schedule an appointment online at MountainWestAnytime.com.

Out With the Old

Cutting down on meat consumption is just one way to focus on your heart health for the new year. Here are three more unhealthy habits to leave in 2021.

- Vaping: E-cigarettes or vaping poses serious risks to your lungs but also your heart. The American College of Cardiology found that e-cigarette users were 56 percent more likely to have a heart attack and 30 percent more likely to have a stroke than nonusers. People who vape were also at higher risk for coronary artery disease and blood clots. This year, reach out for help from a trusted friend, family member or counselor to guit vaping/smoking once and for all.
- Alcohol: Excessive drinking can lead to high blood pressure, heart muscle disease, irregular heartbeat and heart rhythm problems. Heavy drinking can even prematurely age arteries, particularly in men. If you drink, moderation is key to avoid harming your heart. Make it a goal to drink less in the coming year.
- . Inactivity: Not getting enough daily exercise can lead to heart disease even if you have no other risk factors. This year, slowly work up to getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week, or roughly 30 minutes five times a week.

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