

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Heart Disease
- Mediterranean Diet
- Scalloped Potatoes
- Stopping Medications

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## How do I lower my risk for Heart Disease?

How do I lower my risk for heart disease? Lets first start by asking why we want to lower our risk? Heart disease is present in over 13 million Americans. The Framingham Heart Study showed that the lifetime risk for developing heart disease over age 40, is 49 percent in men and 32 percent in women. Known risk factors that increase the likelihood of heart disease include smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, being overweight or obese, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity. So let's take some tangible things that can actually be done. First, quit smoking. After the first year or two of quitting, the excess risk of a cardiac event is decreased by 50



percent. After 3-5 years, the risk approaches that of people who never smoked. Next, lets exercise. In 2013, AHA/ACC recommended at least 40 minutes of aerobic activity 3-4 times per week. In 2008, federal guidelines were released that recommended at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week. So...grab some tennis shoes or a bike and get moving. It has been shown that exercise lowers blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Exercise

also increases insulin sensitivity which lowers blood sugar. This is helpful in individuals with diabetes or pre-diabetes. The next intervention to lower risk for heart disease is lowering cholesterol levels. In order to know the cholesterol level it must first be checked with a blood test. It is best for the lab test to be broken down so the LDL or bad cholesterol number is known. The other numbers (total cholesterol, HDL, and triglycerides) are important as well but the LDL is the main driving factor in preventing heart disease. Saturated fats need to be kept to 5-6 percent or less of the total calories. In order to achieve this, the diet must be rick in fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, poultry, fish, non tropical vegetable oils, low fat dairy, and nuts. Cont....page 3 (2,3).

### Tip of the Month

Qualities of the Mediterranean Diet:

1. Limit the intake of red and processed meats
2. Use extra virgin olive oil daily.
3. Eat at least 3 or more servings a week of tree nuts and peanuts.
4. Eat at least 2-3 servings of fruit and vegetables per day.
5. Eat fish at least 3 times per week or more.
6. Drink 1 or less soda drink per day.
7. Limit baked goods, sweets, and pastries to 3 times or less per week.
8. Eat Legumes at least 3 times per week. (1).





Recipe From “Breaking the Salt Habit” by Erik Williams.

# Scalloped Potatoes

## Ingredients:

1.5 lb Potatoes (sliced thin, about 4 medium potatoes)  
 3\4 cup Onion (chopped)  
 4 Tb Unsalted Butter, divided  
 1 tsp Garlic powder  
 2 Tb All Purpose Flour  
 1\4 tsp Black Pepper  
 1 1\4 cup Skim Milk  
 1 cup Shredded Cheddar Cheese  
 3\4 cup Plain Planko Bread Crumbs  
 Non stick cooking spray

## Directions:

1. Spray 8x8 (2 qt) dish with non stick spray.
2. Layer half of potatoes and onions in bottom of dish.
3. In saucepan, melt 2 Tb of butter. Stir in garlic, flour, and pepper until smooth. Gradually add milk and cheese.
4. Heat until sauce thickens. When sauce is done, put half over the potatoes in the dish.
5. Add the other half of potatoes and onions to dish. Top with remaining

Sauce.

6. Cover with foil and bake 45 minutes.
7. In a small bowl, melt remaining 2 Tb butter, add bread crumbs.
8. After baking for 45 minutes, take out of the oven and top with bread crumbs.
9. Bake uncovered for 15 more minutes.

See page 3 for **Nutrition Information**

**Quote of the Month:** “Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time” Thomas Edison.

## Bible Verse of the Month:

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”  
 Hebrews 11:1.

## Did you Know?



Did you Know that there are some medications that should not be stopped abruptly? Beta blockers are commonly prescribed for individuals with heart disease, high blood pressure, and abnormal heart rhythms. Some examples of beta blockers include Metoprolol, Atenolol, Carvedilol, Bisoprolol, and Bystolic to name a few. Stopping this type of medication abruptly can cause the heart to race, the blood pressure to elevate, and even a heart attack in some cases. Another drug that should not be stopped abruptly is Clonidine. Clonidine is medication used for high blood pressure. If this medication is stopped suddenly, a phenomenon called rebound hypertension can occur. This is when the blood pressure rises, in many cases very high, after stopping certain types of blood pressure medications.

Some other medications that should not be stopped abruptly include antidepressants, steroids, and estrogens. Stopping antidepressants suddenly can lead to “flu” like symptoms or stomach related symptoms. Difficulty concentrating and finding thoughts may also be present. Abruptly withdrawing from steroids, especially if an individual has been taking them for an extended period of time can be life threatening. The body can go into a crisis because it has not had time to produce the hormones needed for the body to function. Some symptoms of this may include weakness, abdominal pain, and weight loss to name a few. Seek medical treatment if any symptoms occur after coming off of a steroid or any medication for that matter. Remember, do not stop any medication without first consulting your medical provider.(4,5,6).

Sodas, sweets, and red meats must be limited. Healthy diet options can be found with the DASH diet, AHA (American Heart Association) diet, or the USDA Food Pattern. The Mediterranean Diet has also been shown to decrease cardiovascular risk. In most individuals, any of the above diets would be better than not making any changes. In some instances, diet may not be enough and a statin drug, among others, may be needed. Next, high blood pressure, also known as Hypertension. High blood pressure is well known to increase the cardiovascular risk. In fact, from age 40 to age 70, for every 20mmHg increase in the systolic blood pressure or 10mmHg in the diastolic blood pressure, the risk for cardiovascular disease doubles. Wow. In addition to some of the other lifestyle changes we have already talked about, decreasing sodium intake is very important in controlling or lowering blood pressure. Daily sodium intake should be kept

**Nutrition Info...**  
**Scalloped Potatoes**

Servings : 10 (1 = 1\2 cup)  
Calories: 190  
Total Fat: 9g  
Sat. Fat: 5g  
Cholesterol 25mg  
Potassium 446 mg  
Carbohydrates 23g  
Protein 6g  
Fiber 2g  
Sugar 1g  
Sodium 95mg

under 2400mg per day in individuals with pre-hypertension or hypertension. Decreasing the sodium intake to 1500mg per day can even further lower the blood pressure. In order to obtain this goal, no added salt is a must. Second, the label must become your friend. Following the diets listed above will help obtain this sodium goal as well. In some cases, medications may be needed to further decrease the blood pressure. However, even if medication is needed, following these diet/lifestyle modifications will help decrease the amount of medication it takes to control the blood pressure. Last but not least is obesity. Overweight is defined by a BMI (body mass index) of 25-29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and obese is defined by a BMI > 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. The first step in losing weight is knowing what the problem is and what is the goal that needs to be reached. Losing weight is like any other problem. It is not easy and will take time. However, in many cases, if 150 minutes of aerobic activity is completed each week along with one of the diet plans above, pounds will shed. It may be very difficult to obtain a “normal” weight in some individuals but every pound makes a difference. Please, before starting any new diet or exercise regimen, consult your healthcare provider and or cardiologist for approval. Good Luck. (1,2,3).