

## Tips for staying heart healthy as a family

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Looking after your heart health is essential, and when the whole whānau gets involved, it becomes easier and more enjoyable. So here are some simple ways your family can work together to keep your hearts healthy and bring you all closer.



### MOVE IT, MOVE IT

Sitting for long periods can be very bad for your heart health. Breaking up long stretches of sitting with physical activity, no matter how small, can make a big difference. And there are plenty of ways to turn exercise into an opportunity for family fun. Like going for a walk or bike ride together. Or why not pack a (healthy) picnic and head to the beach for a swim? If the weather isn't playing ball, you could turn up the tunes and dance around the living room together. Yes, even Dad dancing is great for the heart! Remember, you don't have to go for a run or choose high-intensity training to stay heart healthy. The goal is to enjoy the movement as a family, so make it spontaneous, playful and part of your everyday life.

### EAT YOUR GREENS.

Preparing meals and enjoying delicious food is a great way to bring the family together and encourage healthy eating habits for everyone. Eating more fruit and vegetables can do wonders for your heart. Packed with nutrients and low in calories, they help with managing weight and overall health. The famous phrase, "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants" from author Michael Pollan, is a great reminder of the importance of including fruit and vegetables in every meal. Try to add at least two handfuls of non-starchy vegetables to your main meals and think of fruit as an easy, healthy snack. Other simple ways to get more 'greens' into your day include adding an extra vegetable to dinner, including salad vegetables in sandwiches and adding a piece of fruit to breakfast or lunch.

### DON'T IGNORE STRESS.

Everyone gets stressed sometimes and that includes children and the elderly. Stress can take a toll on your heart, so it's important to recognise when family members, young or old, are feeling overwhelmed. Don't ignore the signs of stress, talk about it. Open conversations can help relieve tension and support emotional wellbeing. The good news is that a healthy diet and plenty of exercise are also great stressbusters. If stress becomes a bigger challenge, don't hesitate to seek advice. You can visit [heartfoundation.org.nz](http://heartfoundation.org.nz) for tips on managing stress and keeping your heart healthy.

By making small changes together this spring, you're not just looking after your own heart health, but the wellbeing of your entire whānau.

Your family could also win this new home in the Heart Foundation Lottery. Located in breathtaking Blenheim, this gorgeous home is fully furnished and valued at \$1,005,000. Tickets are just \$15 each, so be in to win now at [heartlottery.org.nz](http://heartlottery.org.nz)