



Smoking contributes to heart disease, lung disease, certain types of cancers and other serious health problems. It's never too late to stop smoking, no matter how many years you've been a smoker. Ventura County offers an effective and free smoking cessation program. For more information, call 805-201-7867 or email callitquits@ventura.org.

Regular visits to your primary care physician can make a tremendous difference in your health, including your heart health. Through physical examinations and laboratory tests, your doctor can often spot health issues before they become serious. He or she can also direct you to programs and services that will help you live a healthier lifestyle. If you don't have a primary care physician, call the Adventist Health Simi Valley physician referral line, toll-free, at 866-987-0120.

Having information about your health can help you and your physician make the best choices for your healthy lifestyle. It's important to check your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar level, body mass index and other key numbers on a regular basis. Your doctor can do this for you, or you can often get tested through your workplace or through free screenings at community health fairs and other events.

In today's busy world, it's almost impossible to avoid stress. But when you let it overtake you, stress causes negative changes inside your body that can lead to heart disease and many other health problems.

Here are a few ideas to lower your stress level:

Take time to talk with other people—and share your concerns with people you trust.

Get regular exercise. A brief walk can clear your head and help you work through problems.

Do something kind for another person. A small gift, a word of encouragement, a smile—all of these help you get outside of your own problems.

Let yourself sleep. Make sure you're making time in your schedule to get a healthy night's sleep on a regular basis.

Laugh. Watch a funny movie. Go out with your friends. Be silly. Nothing reduces stress like a good laugh.

For many more tips and further information, go online to the American Heart Association at heart.org and search "heart healthy lifestyle."

