Does Exercise Protect Me from Heart Disease?

Being active is an important part of a healthy lifestyle!

Exercise that raises your heart rate can:
• Lower blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels
• Raise “good” cholesterol
• Help manage your weight
• Help control blood sugar levels
• Improve endurance – you get tired less easily
• Relieve stress, decreasing harmful hormones

High Blood Pressure
The heart is a pump. If it has to push blood out against high pressures, over time, the muscle of the heart can get overworked, leading to heart failure.
• Watch your Blood Pressure
• Watch your weight. Being overweight raises blood pressure
• Manage your stress
• Exercise regularly
• If your healthcare provider recommends medications, take them as prescribed. If your medications make you feel bad, let the provider know.

How Active Should the Average Person Be?
Experts recommend 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of moderate activity each week.
• Aim for 30 minutes, 5 days per week
• Try to keep your heart rate up for at least 10 minutes during the exercise session

What Type of Exercise Can You Do?
• Anything that gets your heart pumping
• Stick with something fun, something you enjoy
• Bicycling, walking, jogging, swimming, dancing are all popular ideas
• Casual sports count too! Playing basketball, soccer, flag football

What causes Heart Failure?
Coronary Blockages/Heart Attacks
The coronary arteries feed the heart muscle cells through blood. If the blood flow is blocked to a part of the muscle because of clogged arteries, this leads to a “heart attack”, where bits of the muscle can be starved for oxygen and be damaged, and parts of the tissue can even die. Heart failure can be related to this damage, so it’s important to prevent these plaques from building up.
Watch your cholesterol. Exercise increases the good cholesterol, which actually helps protect the heart. Take medications if necessary and watch the cholesterol in your diet.

Family History
Some types of heart problems are genetic. If you know that heart trouble runs in your family, it is important to let your healthcare provider know so they can help you watch for any problems.

For more information
Find Exercise Logs, Information about Types of Exercise, and Intensity on the AAHFN Patient Education Website
https://www.aahfn.org/patiented

Source: https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults