



Scientific research
shows very real
connections between
your environment and your
cardiovascular health.
Healthy You – Healthy Planet
will help you understand
those connections.



WATCH ME BLOOM!

To do our part to help with a healthy planet, this brochure is made from biodegradable and recycled fibers, seed and plant material. When you are finished with the brochure, plant it in your flower garden and it will grow into Black-Eyed Susans.



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heart.org



HEALTHY you
healthy planet

SIMPLE STEPS
TO IMPROVE
YOUR health,
COMMUNITY
& the planet

Easy rides, not enough strides.

America's mobile society has made travel and other facets of life more convenient. However, it has also led to inactive lifestyles, weight gain and increased air pollution from vehicle emissions.

The overuse of cars has reduced activities such as biking and walking to work. In turn, Americans are heavier and producing more pollution. U.S. vehicles use an additional 1 billion gallons of gas each year because of overweight drivers and passengers. That causes 20 billion pounds or more of carbon dioxide emissions.

Children riding buses instead of walking or biking to school makes kids heavier – and also adds pollution. School bus engines belch tons of exhaust into the sky.

Heavier Americans also force airplanes to burn more fuel creating more pollution. Compared to the previous decade, passenger weight gain caused airlines to burn an additional 350 million gallons of fuel and release an additional 3.8 million tons of carbon dioxide and other particulate matter in one year.¹

Studies show a growing link between air pollution and heart attacks, strokes and cardiovascular disease. “Particulate matter appears to directly increase risk by triggering events in susceptible individuals within hours to days of an increased level of exposure, even among those who otherwise may have been healthy for years,” said Dr. Robert Brook, M.D., lead author of an American Heart Association scientific statement.²

Heart-healthy communities.

There is a proven link between community planning and public health. In areas with little access to healthy foods and few opportunities for physical activity, there are higher levels of obesity. Communities with safe sidewalks, green spaces, parks, public transportation, and ready access to fruits and vegetables have nearly 40 percent less diabetes risk than communities without those resources.

One recent study found that children are more likely to be obese if their schools are near fast-food restaurants. They also eat fewer fruits and vegetables and drink more sugary soda than at other schools. Corner stores in low-income and high-minority communities also have led to unhealthier eating habits.

Studies have shown a direct cost-benefit of building bike and pedestrian trails, which reduce healthcare costs associated with physical inactivity. Trails and walkways allow for community integration, less traffic and better quality of life.

Community gardens, local farmers' markets, and youth agricultural and culinary training programs are also important ways to address healthy food access.

What can you do?

Here are some small steps you can take to make big changes in your health, community and environment.

Start! moving more.

- Heading to the corner store? Walk or ride your bike instead of driving. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. That can be done 10 or 15 minutes at a time.
- Not enough time to exercise and spend time with your kids? Walk them to school. You'll be surprised how much physical activity and quality time you'll get.
- Help make your workplace “Fit Friendly.” Check out StartWalkingNow.org today to find out more.

Start! in the kitchen and in the store.

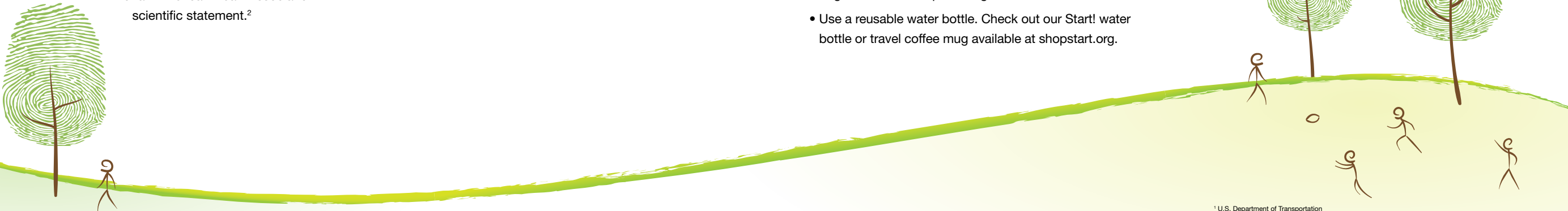
- Eat healthier. Visit heart.org/nutritioncenter for tips and recipes.
- Look for farmers markets to buy your fruits and vegetables. Buying locally grown foods offers fresh choices and helps reduce greenhouse gases because the produce isn't transported over large distances.
- Plant a garden in your yard. The payoff is more physical activity and fresh vegetables for healthy eating.
- Take your own bags to the store to cut down on the use of plastic bags. Shop Start! has reusable shopping bags for sale at shopstart.org.
- Use a reusable water bottle. Check out our Start! water bottle or travel coffee mug available at shopstart.org.

Start! in your community.

- Find or create a Start! Walking Path. Visit StartWalkingNow.org, click on “Walking Paths” and look for a local walking path.
- Adopt a Highway. Many communities have “Adopt A Highway” or “Adopt a Street” programs. Cleaning up roadside litter is a great way to get physical activity while making your community a better place to live.
- Turn “brown spaces” and vacant lots into green spaces and parks. This will help the environment and your community, and it will encourage families and groups to be physically active.
- Go outside! Check out the Nature Rocks website, naturerocks.org, for ways families can spend time together learning about the joys of nature.

Show your support!

Visit Start! at StartWalkingNow.org – register for Start! today, find your local Start! Heart Walk and get involved. Also, look for our Healthy You – Healthy Planet earth-friendly products at shopstart.org.



¹ U.S. Department of Transportation
² Dr. Robert Brook, M.D., lead author of an American Heart Association scientific statement.