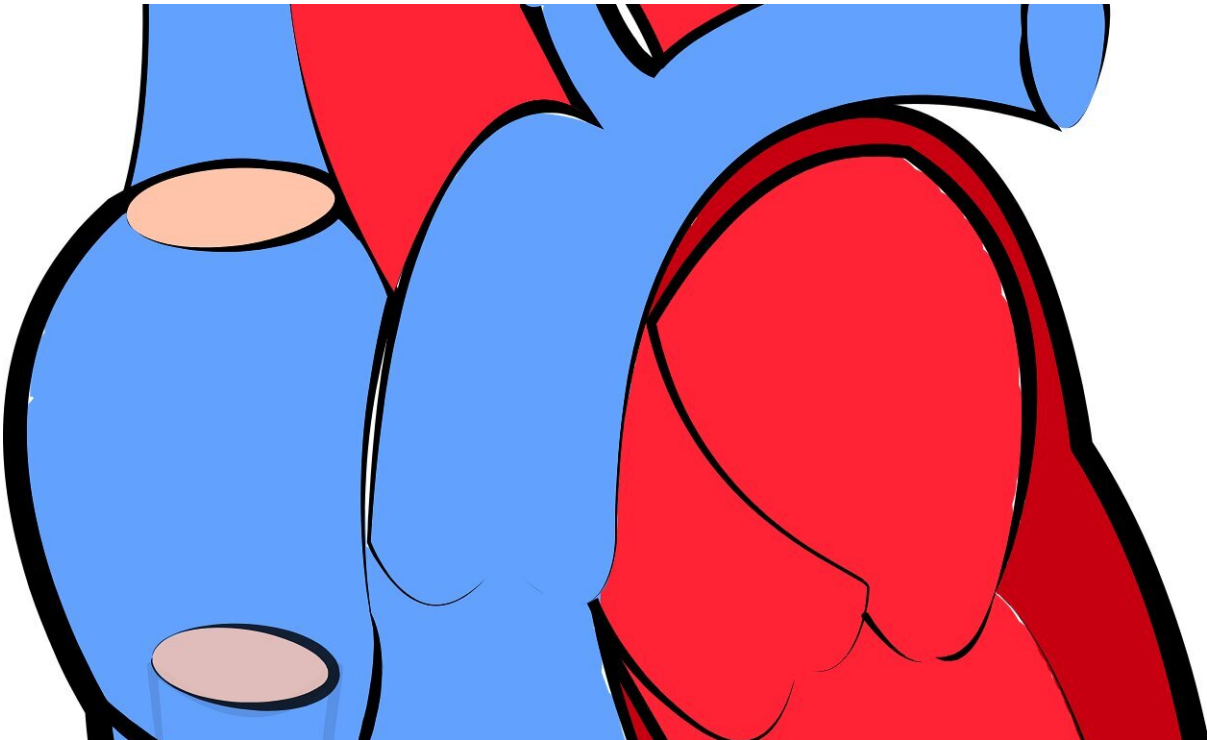


# Mayo clinic minute: Reversing versus preventing heart disease

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Regular exercise, a heart-healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight and not smoking can help prevent heart disease. But is there anything that you can do to reverse it?

Yes, in certain cases, says Dr. Stephen Kopecky, a Mayo Clinic

cardiologist. "The heart disease you can reverse is the narrowing of the arteries in the heart," says Dr. Kopecky.

He says even if you have known [heart disease](#), you can improve your risk factors for developing blockages that cause heart attack. And while [lifestyle changes](#) won't open an artery if it's already blocked by calcification, they can help prevent other blockages from happening.

"Once you do things like [stop smoking](#), take care of your diabetes, take care of blood pressure, the progression stops," says Dr. Kopecky.

Making changes isn't easy and it takes some time to see improvements. Dr. Kopecky says to start small. Replace a bag of chips with an apple and build from there. Because, he says, it's worth it.

"There are so many good benefits to lifestyle in addition to just helping your heart. It also helps reduce Alzheimer's disease, almost all cancers and arthritis. A lot of good things happen," says Dr. Kopecky.

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