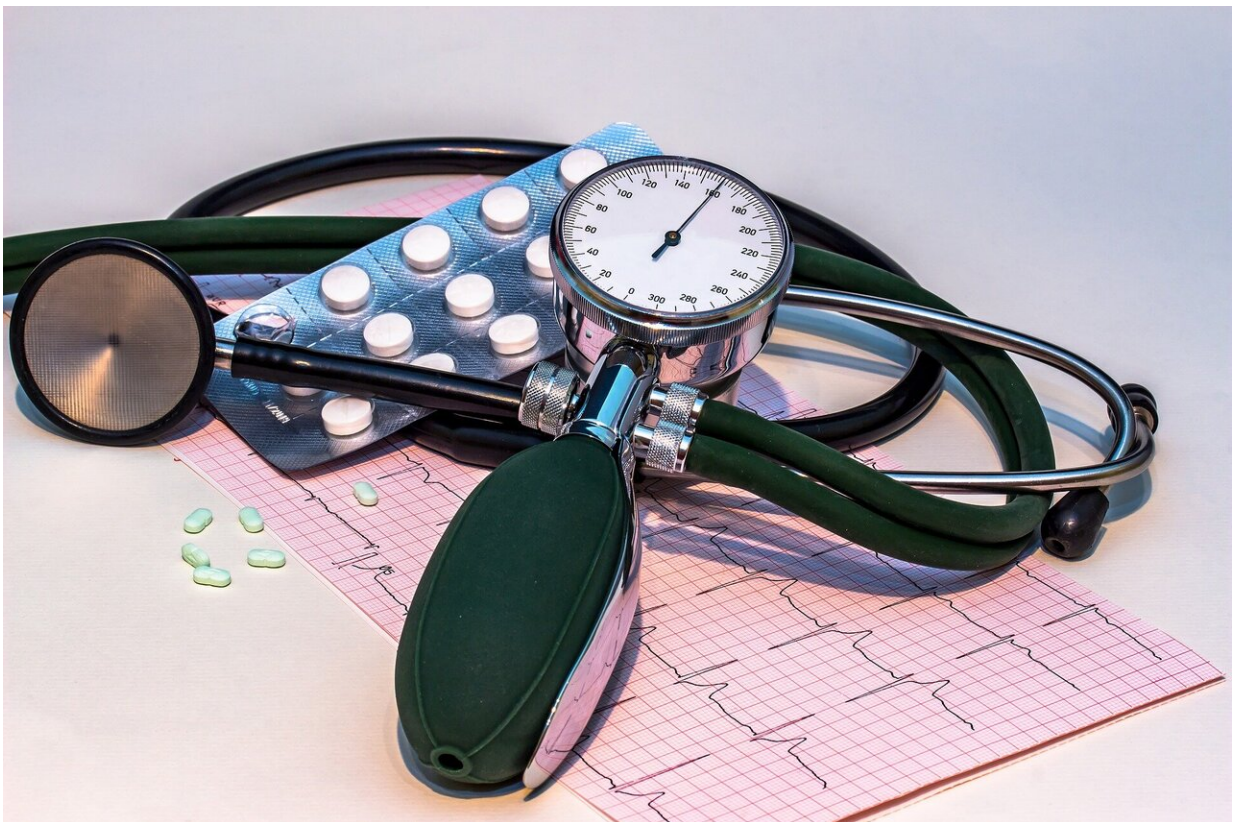


New digital tools help people with high blood pressure and high cholesterol make meaningful behavior change

June 24 2020



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

About 22% of people with heart disease struggle with depression and according to a 2015 study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*,

depression alone costs the U.S. economy an estimated \$210 billion per year, with more than 60% of the cost related to treating comorbid conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. To help people with heart disease make meaningful behavior change so they can live life more fully, the American Heart Association, the leading voluntary health organization devoted to a world of longer, healthier lives, and [Happify Health](#) have worked together to incorporate the Association's science-based health content into Happify Heart and Mind, a new mental health program offered through the Happify Health Solutions platform to employers and health plans.

Happify Heart and Mind teaches people with [high blood pressure](#) and high cholesterol strategies to reduce stress, incorporate more heart-healthy foods into their diet, and integrate more movement into their days. A variety of activities are available, including guided meditations, healthy meal prep strategies, psychoeducational content and goal-setting exercises. Happify Heart and Mind features a total of 10 content tracks, including the exclusive track developed by the Association, "Defeat Stress and Live a Heart-Healthy Life," as well as many of Happify's specially curated tracks for a healthy lifestyle, such as "Get Motivated to Get Fit," and "Your Anxiety Antidote: Mindfulness Meditation." Also incorporated in the program are [heart-healthy](#) physical activities, including short videos that feature stretching, core exercises, resistance training, and mindful yoga flows.

"We are honored to be working with the American Heart Association to help meet the mental health needs of those living with [cardiovascular disease](#)—needs that have become more complicated during this global pandemic," said Ofer Leidner, president and co-founder at Happify Health, "We're proud to offer Heart and Mind as a healthy resource that can be used anywhere and at any time, to help people with [heart disease](#) and stroke survivors better cope with their symptoms while at home, now, and in the future."

Multiple studies recently presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions reinforced the link between mental health and cardiovascular health. The correlation is also a focus of the Association's 40-plus member CEO Roundtable leadership collaborative, which produced a roadmap for employers to tackle growing challenges for addressing mental health issues. The CEO Roundtable has also launched a nationwide public awareness campaign that aims to normalize the conversation around mental health, reduce stigma, and help employees engage with company-provided resources to address this prevalent health issue.

"With our increased focus on the links between mental health and cardiovascular disease and stroke, this collaboration with Happify is a natural extension of the Association's increased focus on the links between mental health and cardiovascular disease," said Eduardo Sanchez, M.D., chief medical officer for prevention at the American Heart Association. "As we work toward a world of longer, healthier lives, it's important for us to address all of the risk factors that impact people's health, from Life's Simple 7 to mental health."

Following the Association's Life's Simple 7, the seven [risk factors](#) that people can improve through lifestyle changes to help achieve ideal cardiovascular health, can greatly increase physical and mental wellness and decrease deaths by 76%. However, according to an AHA Journals published study, just 1% of people do all seven, and 91% do just one. A study published by the [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#) (NCBI) found that up to 40% of cardiac patients meet the criteria for major depressive disorder or experience an elevation in depressive symptoms.

The efficacy of Happify's therapy has been proven through two randomized controlled trials and three published studies in peer-reviewed publications. One published randomized controlled trial found

a 25% reduction in both the symptoms of anxiety and depression for those using Happify, when compared with an active comparison condition, psychoeducation, used as directed by this study. More information about Happify's scientific testing and research science can be found on the Happify Labs page.

More information: Earl S. Ford et al. Ideal Cardiovascular Health and Mortality From All Causes and Diseases of the Circulatory System Among Adults in the United States, *Circulation* (2012). [DOI: 10.1161/circulationaha.111.049122](https://doi.org/10.1161/circulationaha.111.049122)

Acacia C. Parks et al. Testing a scalable web and smartphone based intervention to improve depression, anxiety, and resilience: A randomized controlled trial, *International Journal of Wellbeing* (2019). [DOI: 10.5502/ijw.v8i2.745](https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v8i2.745)

Provided by American Heart Association

Citation: New digital tools help people with high blood pressure and high cholesterol make meaningful behavior change (2020, June 24) retrieved 9 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-digital-tools-people-high-blood.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--