

February is Heart Month

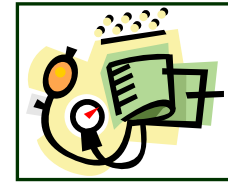
Learning about cardiovascular disease now can stop heartache later!

The heart is a powerful muscle responsible for pumping blood to the entire body. In a healthy adult, the body contains 5 liters of blood circulated over and over through the body. The entire cycle takes about 60 seconds, during which time the blood carries oxygen and nutrients to all the cells in the body.



Get Moving: Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and most adults are not physically active enough to gain any health benefits. According to the latest joint American Heart Association/American College of Sports Medicine guidelines on physical activity, all healthy adults ages 18-65 should be getting at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity five days of the week.

An Ounce of Prevention: Know your blood pressure. Your heart moves blood through your body. If it is hard for your heart to move this blood, your heart works harder, and your blood pressure will rise.



Work on your Habits: Since the human heart's job is to pump nutrient-rich blood throughout your body, if you smoke, take drugs, or drink alcohol excessively, you are giving your heart extra work. Smoking doubles your risk of having a heart attack and can even quadruple your risk of sudden cardiac death. There is hope for former smokers - you can completely lower their risk of sudden cardiac death within ten years of quitting.

Warning Signs: Many heart attacks cause completely different sensations!

- Pressure, fullness, squeezing, or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back again.
- Pain spreads to the shoulders, neck, or arms. The arm may be tingling or numb.
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, dizziness, weakness, fainting, sweating, nausea, or shortness of breath.
- Nausea, vomiting
- Cold sweats, shortness of breath and lightheadedness
- Feeling of indigestion & abdominal pain

Are You At Risk?

The more of these factors that apply to you, the greater your risk:

- Menstruation has stopped
- Smoking
- Family history of heart disease before age 60
- High blood pressure (even treated)
- Diabetes (even mild, even treated)
- Obesity
- High cholesterol (even treated)

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