

Heart Health Month

February is American Heart Month. Heart disease is a major problem. Every year, about 715,000 Americans have a heart attack. About 600,000 people die from heart disease in the United States each year—that's 1 out of every 4 deaths. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women.

The term "heart disease" refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type in the United States is coronary heart disease (also called coronary artery disease), which occurs when a substance called plaque builds up in the arteries that supply blood to the heart. Coronary heart disease can cause heart attack, angina, heart failure, and arrhythmias.

The situation is alarming, but there is good news—heart disease is preventable and controllable. We can start by taking small steps every day to bring our loved ones and ourselves closer to heart health. CDC is providing a tip a day throughout February, but you can take these small steps all year long.

One Step at a Time

As you begin your journey to better heart health, keep these things in mind:

- Don't become overwhelmed. Every step brings you closer to a healthier heart.
- Don't go it alone. The journey is more fun when you have company. Ask friends and family to join you.
- Don't get discouraged. You may not be able to take all of the steps at one time. Get a good night's sleep and do what you can tomorrow.
- Reward yourself. Find fun things to do to decrease your stress. Round up some colleagues for a lunchtime walk, join a singing group, or have a healthy dinner with your family or friends

Plan for Prevention

Some health conditions and lifestyle factors can put people at a higher risk for developing heart disease. You can help prevent heart disease by making healthy choices and managing any medical conditions you may have.

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly.
- Monitor your blood pressure.
- Don't smoke.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Have your cholesterol checked.
- Manage your diabetes.
- Take your medicine

What are the symptoms of heart attack?

The major symptoms of a heart attack are:

Chest pain or discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center or left side of the chest that lasts for more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.

Feeling weak, light-headed, or faint. You may also break out into a cold sweat.

Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back.

Pain or discomfort in one or both arms or shoulders.

Shortness of breath. This often comes along with chest discomfort, but shortness of breath also can happen before chest discomfort.

Other symptoms of a heart attack could include unusual or unexplained tiredness and nausea or vomiting. Women are more likely to have these other symptoms. Learn more about women and heart disease.

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