

Heart Health



Leader Talking Points

- Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) is a result of plaque buildup in the arteries surrounding the heart
 - Causes reduced blood flow into the heart and out to the rest of the body
- Risk factors you **cannot** change:
 - Age – 82% who die of CHD are 65 years or older
 - Gender – Men are at greater risk of CHD than women
 - Heredity – Children of parents with CHD are more likely to develop heart disease
 - Ethnicity – More African Americans have increased blood pressure, which can increase the risk of CHD
- Risk factors you **can** change:
 - Smoking – Smokers are 2-4 times more likely to develop CHD than non-smokers
 - High cholesterol – High cholesterol causes the arteries to narrow and blood flow to be slowed or blocked
 - High blood pressure – Increases the heart's workload, causing heart muscle to thicken and become stiff
 - Physical inactivity – Regular moderate exercise helps prevent heart and blood vessel disease
 - Overweight – Increases the heart's workload (at least 65% who develop high blood pressure are overweight)
 - Diabetes – Diabetes and heart disease go hand in hand
 - Stress – Stress may affect behaviors and factors that increase heart disease risk, including high blood pressure and cholesterol levels, smoking, physical inactivity, and overeating
 - Alcohol – Excessive drinking can raise your blood pressure, cause heart failure, and lead to stroke
 - Diet – Excessive fat, fried foods, and sugar contribute to heart disease
- Signs and symptoms of heart disease:
 - *Angina* – Chest pain or discomfort
 - May feel like pressure or squeezing in your chest, shoulders, arms, neck, jaw, and/or back
 - Can often be mistaken for indigestion
 - Shortness of breath
- The best way to prevent CHD is to adopt a healthy lifestyle
 - Follow a healthy diet – Whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, and lean meat
 - Maintain a healthy weight – Work with your healthcare provider or a registered dietitian to create a reasonable weight loss plan if you're overweight
 - Get active – Aim for 20 minutes of moderate exercise every day
 - Stop smoking – Quitting can cut your chance of heart attack by 1/3
- Time is muscle—The sooner medical attention is sought, the better the outcome after a heart event!
- Seek immediate help if you experience the below. **Do not drive to the hospital—call 911!**
 - Pressure or pain in the center of the chest
 - Pain or discomfort that spreads to the shoulders/neck/arms/jaw
 - Sweating, clammy skin, and/or paleness
 - Shortness of breath
 - Nausea or vomiting (women in particular)
 - Dizziness or fainting
 - Rapid or irregular heartbeat/pulse
 - Generalized feeling of fatigue (women in particular)
 - Indigestion (women in particular)