University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service

ADULT

HEALTH BULLETIN

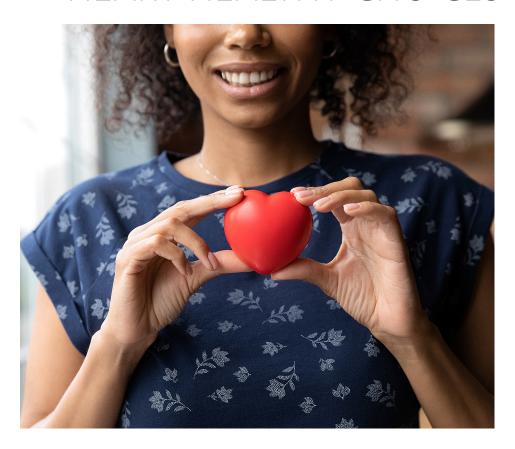


FEBRUARY 2023

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

HEART-HEALTHY CHOICES EVERY DAY



LEXINGTON, KY 40546

very February, the American Health Association sponsors American Heart Month to increase awareness about heart disease. During February, and throughout the year, the AHA encourages all Americans to consider ways they can increase their heart health and decrease their risk of cardiovascular disease.

Heart-healthy living involves understanding your risk, making healthy choices, and taking steps to reduce your chances of getting heart disease. By taking action, you can lower your risk of heart disease and improve your overall health and well-being.

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Preventing heart disease starts with knowing what your risks factors are and what you can do to lower them. Some risk factors you cannot change. These include your age, sex, and a family history of early heart disease. Many others you can modify. For example, being more physically active, not smoking, and eating healthy are important steps for your heart health.

Risk factors such as high blood pressure or cholesterol do not have obvious signs or symptoms. A crucial step in determining your risk is to see your health-care provider for a thorough checkup and risk assessment. Your provider can be an important partner in helping you set and reach goals for heart health. Ask about your risk for heart disease at your annual checkup. Since your risk can change over time, keep asking each year.

Healthy choices that everyone should take also decrease a person's chances of developing heart disease. These include eating a healthy diet and being physically active. A heart-healthy eating plan includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy. It also limits sodium (salt), saturated fat, added sugars, and alcohol. Small changes in dietary habits can add up over time. They are often more sustainable than making a drastic change to eating patterns all at once.

Regular physical activity can help you lose excess weight, improve physical fitness, lower many heart disease risk factors such as "bad" LDL cholesterol levels, increase "good" HDL cholesterol levels, and manage high blood pressure, lower stress, and improve your mental health. Talk with your health-care provider before you start a new exercise plan. Discuss how much and what types of physical activity are safe for you. Even modest amounts of physical activity are good for your health.

To encourage people to add heart-conscious practices into their daily routine, the AHA partnered with the National Institute of Health. They created a calendar for the month of February that includes one heart-healthy activity to complete each day.



These activities range from completing a specific physical activity, to adding heart-healthy foods, to health behaviors such as having your blood pressure checked. You can download 28 Days to a Healthy Heart at https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/28-days-towards-healthy-heart.

REFERENCE:

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-healthy-living

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