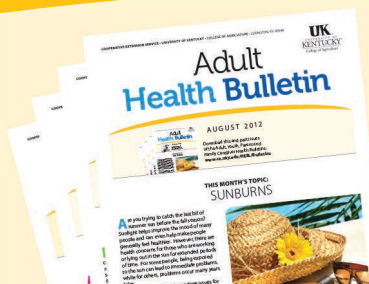


Adult Health Bulletin



FEBRUARY 2015

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HEART DISEASE

Every year the American Heart Association and the Department of Health and Human Services work together to promote American Heart Month and the National Wear Red Day. The goal of this awareness campaign is to work with women to protect their hearts and draw attention to the No. 1 killer of women in the United States — heart disease.

Here are some common myths about heart disease:

Myth 1: Only men have heart disease. Although you may think that only men are affected by heart disease, the truth is that heart disease actually kills more women than men.

Myth 2: Heart disease is only for older people. Unfortunately, people of all ages die from heart disease. For younger women, their chances of heart disease increase with the combination of birth control pills and smoking. As a person ages, the risk increases, but unhealthy lifestyle choices about foods and not being active also contribute to increased risk.

Myth 3: If I exercise all the time, I will not get



heart disease. A person may have heart disease for reasons other than inactivity. Even if you exercise every day, if you eat fast food regularly you are more likely to have a higher risk for heart disease. Cholesterol levels also play a factor. The American Heart Association suggests that a person begin checking cholesterol levels as the age of 20, even

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You can help prevent heart disease by eating a balanced diet and exercising on a regular basis.

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younger if there is a family history of heart disease.

Myth 4: Everyone in my family has heart disease, so why even bother trying to stop it.

Although a person with a family history of heart disease should be cautious, there are many ways that an individual can reduce their chance of heart disease. A person can reduce their risk by staying active, eating balanced meals, staying aware of their cholesterol levels, watching and reducing blood sugar levels and stopping smoking.

A heart attack happens when blood is unable to get to the heart. Usually this happens because there is a blockage in one of the arteries around the heart. If someone you know were having a heart attack, would you notice?

The symptoms for a heart attack include:

- Pressure, squeezing or pain in the chest. This pain does not last more than a few minutes. It also does not go away and come back.
- Pain or a feeling of discomfort in the arm, back, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath. (this can be with or without chest pressure or pain)
- Sweating without being active.
- Nausea or feeling light-headed.

If you or someone you know thinks they are having a heart attack, you should do the following:

- Call 911 immediately. Make sure to follow the operator's instructions regarding what to do next.
- Do NOT drive yourself or someone else to the hospital, unless there is no other choice.
- Stay as calm as possible. The person having the heart attack should stay calm and take slow breaths while waiting for emergency help.

Starting this month begin making changes for a heart healthy life. **Here are some ways you can celebrate National Heart Month:**

- **Live healthy.** You can help prevent heart disease by eating a balanced diet and exercising on a regular basis. Talk to your local Extension agent to learn ways to cook a new vegetable



or to use a new fruit. If you are thinking about being more active, check out local organizations that may have walking clubs or programs.

- **Know the signs of a heart attack.** Did you know that the signs of a heart attack may be different for men and women? Heart attack victims are commonly seen having chest and arm pain, but other symptoms may occur including shortness of breath, back pain, jaw pain and nausea.
- **Start walking!** Stay as active as possible. Walking is a great way to start moving if you have not been active in a while or want to stay active. Walking does not take a lot of special equipment and you usually do not have to go to a gym. See if you and a few of your friends can start a walking club.
- **Know your family history.** Has anyone in your family had heart disease? Knowing your family history can help you determine your risk. Talk to your healthcare provider if others in your family have had heart disease.

SOURCES:

- American Heart Association <https://www.goredforwomen.org/live-healthy/first-steps-to-prevent-heart-disease-and-be-heart-healthy/lifes-simple-7/>
- Health and Human Services <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/hearttruth/events/wear-red.htm>
- American Heart Association https://www.goredforwomen.org/about-heart-disease/symptoms_of_heart_disease_in_women/hard-to-recognize-heart-attack-symptoms/

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