

Getting the Facts about Heart Disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. About 610,000 Americans die from heart disease each year. Someone dies of a heart attack every 42 seconds. And every minute someone dies from a heart disease related event.

High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol and smoking are key heart disease risk factors. About half of Americans have at least one of these three risk factors.

Other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can put people at a higher risk for heart disease. These include: diabetes; being overweight and/or obese; poor diet; physical inactivity and excessive alcohol use.

There are five major symptoms of a heart attack. They are:

1. Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck or back.
2. Feeling weak, light-headed or faint.
3. Chest pain or discomfort.
4. Pain or discomfort in arms or shoulder
5. Shortness of breath.

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

If you notice the symptoms of a heart attack in yourself or someone else, call 9-1-1 immediately. The sooner you get to an emergency room, the sooner you can receive treatment to prevent total blockage and heart muscle damage or reduce the amount of damage. At the hospital, health care professionals can run test to determine whether a heart attack is occurring and decide the best treatment.

In some cases, a heart attack requires cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), or electrical shock (defibrillation.). Bystanders trained to use CPR or a defibrillator may be able to help until emergency medical personnel arrive.

Remember the chances of surviving a heart attack are greater the sooner emergency treatments begin.

There are steps that you can take to having a healthy heart.

Eat Smart

- Sit down and eat as a family to help ensure healthy and balanced meals.
- Build your cooking skills so you can control the amount of sodium and what ingredients are used.
- Keep your kitchen stocked with fruits, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains to add true nourishment.

Add More Color

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to your diet throughout the day.
- Enjoy them with your meals and enjoy them as snacks.
- Choose fresh, frozen, or canned in their own juices and water.

Move More

- A good starting goal is at least 150 minutes a week. If you don't want to sweat, just move more.
- A goal is to work up to 250 minutes a week or 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Include a variety of exercise that helps with endurance, balance, strength and flexibility.

Be Well

- Get enough sleep.
- Practice mindfulness.
- Manage stress.
- Keep mind and body fit.
- Connect socially with others.
- Have health and wellness checkups and blood tests with your doctor.

Adapted from: Center for Disease Control and American Heart Association