

About 610,000 people die of heart disease in the United States every year—that's 1 in every 4 deaths.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



Protect Your Heart

When you think of living a healthy lifestyle, heart health may not be the first thing that immediately comes to mind, but it's very important!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. While there are a variety of risk factors that contribute to this, making healthy lifestyle choices to protect your heart can lessen these risks.

With February being American Heart Month, get educated on the ways to maintain a healthy heart.

What is Heart Disease?

Heart disease refers to a group of conditions that affect the heart.

Atherosclerosis is the build-up of plaque in artery walls. It narrows the arteries making it harder for blood to flow and can cause a heart attack or stroke.

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the most common heart condition and can lead to a heart attack. CHD kills more than 370,000 people annually.

Heart failure doesn't mean the heart stops beating. It means blood has stopped flowing properly through the heart. Almost 5 million Americans are living with congestive heart failure (CHF).

Know the Signs

It's important to know the first signs of a heart attack so you can seek help immediately.

- Chest pain or discomfort that doesn't go away after a few minutes
- Pain or discomfort in the neck, jaw, or back
- Pain or discomfort in the arms or shoulders
- Weakness, lightheadedness, nausea, or breaking out into a cold sweat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Significant Risk Factors of Heart Disease

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is often known as the “silent killer”. This is because many times there are no obvious symptoms of high blood pressure. A good rule of thumb is to have a blood pressure below **130/80 mmHg**. However, this is not the same goal for everyone.

Knowing the risk factors of high blood pressure and managing them appropriately can help increase your quality of life and reduce your risk of heart problems.

- Quit smoking
- Eat a diet low in sodium
- Exercise for 30 minutes at least five days a week
- Take your blood-pressure medication(s) as directed

Smoking Cigarettes

Smoking can temporarily increase your blood pressure and over time increase your risk of developing many chronic disorders, including coronary artery disease.

Controlling and preventing coronary artery disease is important to help decrease your risk of heart attack or stroke.

For help quitting tobacco use, visit smokefree.gov or call the tobacco quit line at 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).

High Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance your body needs to function. When you have too much cholesterol, it can build up in your blood vessels and put you at risk for a heart attack or stroke.

One in six American adults have high cholesterol, but some risk factors cannot be controlled. These include age, gender (men are at greater risk), and family history.

Knowing your cholesterol is very important. High LDL levels can lead to many serious conditions, such as heart disease. Discuss with your doctor to develop a cholesterol management plan that works for you.

Take Charge of Your Risk Factors By:

- **Engaging** in physical activity regularly
- **Maintaining** a healthy weight
- **Eating** a well-balanced, nutritious diet
- **Limiting** alcohol consumption
- **Quitting** smoking and tobacco use
- **Managing** stress

Learning how to achieve and maintain a healthy body and lifestyle is not always easy, but only you can make changes to improve your health and reduce your risk of developing heart disease and other serious illnesses.

Do You Know the Signs of a Stroke? Think FAST

F Face

Is the face drooping or uneven?

A Arm

Is one arm weak, tingling, or numb?

S Speech

Is it harder than normal to understand the person? Is speech slurred or is the person unable to speak?

T Time

Call 911 as quickly as possible

We care about your health and well-being and our staff of registered nurse care managers, mental health professionals, wellness coaches and clinical pharmacists are here to help. If you have questions, please call 855-586-2568, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MT.