

Heart Health



February is National Heart Month!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States for men and women. According to the CDC about 715,000 Americans have a heart attack each year and 600,000 people die from heart disease.

While these numbers are troubling there is some good news – ***heart disease is preventable and controllable***. We can start by taking small steps to prevent heart disease and improve our cardiovascular health.

EXERCISE – Get moving!! The Surgeon General recommends 30 min of moderate-intensity exercise on most days of the week. Break it up into 3 - 10 min workouts if you are strapped for time. Start small by taking the stairs or parking across the parking lot. Building muscle helps to increase blood circulation which strengthens the heart, increases energy and decreases stress!

DIET – Choose **healthy meals and snacks**. Make sure to eat plenty of fresh fruit and veggies (for an adult this means 5 servings/day). Eat foods low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol and high in fiber. Also try to limit your sodium or salt intake and stick to one alcoholic drink per day to help decrease blood pressure.

DON'T SMOKE – Smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease and is the leading *preventable* cause of death in the US. Don't start smoking and if you are **QUIT!** Visit www.smokefree.gov for information and help in getting started.

REDUCE STRESS – Worry, anger, and anxiety cause stress hormones to be released into the body. This causes increased blood pressure and can damage the heart. **Learn relaxation techniques** that work for you such as meditation, yoga, finding 10 min to yourself, or getting together with family and friends for some laughs!

For more information visit www.cdc.gov