

American Heart Month

February is American Heart Month. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and approximately 1.5 million heart attacks and strokes happen every year. Many people who are at high risk for heart attack or stroke do not even know it. Here are some hard facts about heart disease:

- Following a heart attack, approximately 1 in 4 women will die the first year compared to 1 in 5 men;
- 1 American dies from stroke every 4 minutes;
- 1 in every 3 deaths is from heart disease and stroke which equals 2,200 deaths per day;
- 90% of Americans consume too much sodium, increasing their risk for high blood pressure, a major contributor to heart disease and stroke;
- Approximately 160,000 people who died from cardiovascular disease in 2014 were younger than 65;
- African Americans have the highest rate of high blood pressure of all population groups and they tend to develop it earlier in life than others.

Many risks for heart disease and stroke, including high blood pressure and high cholesterol, may not have any symptoms. Many of these risks, specifically high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, and obesity, are preventable and controllable through healthy lifestyle changes. Controlling these risks could reduce ones risk for attack or stroke by more than 80%. Before making changes, one should talk with their health care provider about the ABCS:

- Aspirin when appropriate
- Blood pressure control
- Cholesterol management
- Smoking cessation

Healthy lifestyle changes can control and prevent risks for these conditions by:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Being active most days
- Not smoking or using tobacco
- Limiting alcohol use

Prevention starts with everyone, it is important to understand the risks and take control of one's heart health by eating a heart-healthy diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium and trans-fat. Most importantly, following doctor's prescription instructions and orders.

For more information contact Crockett Resource Center for Independent Living 936-544-2811.

