



HEART HEALTH

FEBRUARY is

Heart Month

MASTER THE ART OF HEART-HEALTHY LIVING

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DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK?

February is American Heart Month, an annual nation-wide observance aiming to increase awareness about heart disease and raise funds for life-saving research. Heart disease affects over 276 million Americans and is the leading cause of death in the United States. What's more, approximately 735,000 heart attacks and 424,000 cardiac arrests occur within the population each year. In the event of a heart attack or cardiac arrest, acting quickly can save a life.

SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

Heart attack symptoms are not always severe, can occur gradually and may vary between individuals. However, the following are common warning signs:

- Chest discomfort
- Unusual sensations elsewhere in the upper body
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Light-headedness
- Sweating

If you notice these symptoms in yourself or someone else, call 911 immediately. While you wait for emergency services to arrive, chew a



tablet of adult Aspirin and sit or lie down. Those who take nitroglycerin should take their regular dosage.

SIGNS OF CARDIAC ARREST

Cardiac arrest can affect anyone, even someone who's young and in good health. It can occur suddenly and without warning. You can recognize a cardiac arrest by the following signs:

- Sudden collapse
- Unresponsiveness to touch or sound
- Abnormal or no breathing

In the event of cardiac arrest, call 911 immediately. Do not hesitate to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) if one is available. Administer CPR by pressing hard and fast on the affected person's chest. Do not stop until the person moves or help arrives.

CHOLESTEROL AND HEART DISEASE: WHEN TO GET TESTED

Many people mistakenly believe that they don't need to worry about heart disease until they reach middle-age. Not only is this belief unfounded, it's also problematic. Here's why.

EARLY CHOICES HAVE LASTING CONSEQUENCES

Heart disease is most commonly caused by the accumulation of plaque in blood vessels. This plaque can start accumulating as early as childhood and adolescence. What's more, these formative periods can create enduring lifestyle habits that become hard to break the older one gets.

CHOLESTEROL TESTING SHOULD BEGIN EARLY

In general, people should begin monitoring their cholesterol at age 20. However, those with a family history of early onset heart disease should begin testing even earlier. Lifestyle changes and medication can decrease your level of bad cholesterol. Early intervention is key.

It's never too late or too early to monitor and manage your heart disease risk factors. Speak with your doctor to learn more.

Committed to Your Care



Perry County Health System has built a strong reputation for excellent service and is committed to caring for you. Comprised of a hospital, specialty clinics, family care, therapy, counseling, and more; Perry County Health System is small enough to provide personalized care, yet large enough to deliver comprehensive, state-of-the-art results. Our team of doctors, surgeons, nurses, and technicians are *advanced, experienced, and trusted.*



Therapy Services



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Perry County Health System

people *care* more here

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LIFESTYLE LIKELY TO BLAME FOR PREMATURE HEART DISEASE



Heart attacks are most common among people aged 65 and older. When heart failure occurs in a younger patient, genetics are usually assumed to be the cause. However, a recent study suggests that lifestyle factors are the more likely culprit.

GENETIC PREDISPOSITION

Researchers looked at over 555 patients under 50 who'd experienced angina and heart attacks. Using genome sequencing, a genetic risk score was assigned to both patients and controls. On average, patients had a higher score. This shows

that genetics do have an influence. However, taking modifiable risk factors into consideration provides a different picture.

THE ROLE OF MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS

The study assessed patients for five modifiable risk factors: lack of physical activity, smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. They found that each factor exponentially increased the likelihood of developing a heart condition. Three quarters of the patient group exhibited at least three risk factors, resulting in a 24-fold increase in their risk of heart disease.

A VARIABLE CONTRIBUTION

While genetics are involved in premature heart disease, modifiable lifestyle factors play a much more decisive role. The study concludes that premature heart disease is much more likely to be caused by lifestyle factors.

This supports current recommendations to make lifestyle changes to reduce heart disease risk, even in the presence of genetic predisposition. Given how decisive modifiable risk factors are, managing them better is likely to offset genetic risk.

Your HEART IS OUR CALLING



At the **Saint Francis Heart Hospital**, our team provides personalized care and innovative treatment for heart and vascular conditions. With our experienced providers and state-of-the-art facilities, your heart is in good hands.



Heart Hospital



sfmc.net/heart

REDUCING RED MEAT CONSUMPTION TO PRESERVE HEART HEALTH



Red and processed meat, which is heavily consumed in North America, is a known contributing factor to heart disease. Luckily, reducing your consumption by only half may significantly reduce its negative health impacts.

RED MEAT AND HEART DISEASE

Red and processed meat includes fresh beef, pork, lamb and veal, as well as any meats preserved through processes other than freezing (e.g. curing or smoking). These products typically contain high amounts of saturated fatty acids. Consuming these leads to the accumulation of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol in blood vessels, thereby increasing the risk of coro-

nary blockages and heart disease.

REDUCING INTAKE COULD HELP

Cutting out red and processed meat entirely may not be easy, but researchers have found that simply replacing half of the red and processed meat one eats with fish, poultry or meat substitutes provides significant benefits. The study showed that subjects who did so saw a 10 percent drop in their LDL cholesterol levels over 12 weeks, which is significant.

Reducing red and processed meat consumption is a key way to improve your health and a simple means to mitigate your risk for heart disease.

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LIFESTYLE FACTORS AND HEART DISEASE: HOW TO LOWER YOUR RISK

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Risk factors such as age and genetics can't be modified, but those related to lifestyle can be.

MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS

Key risk factors related to lifestyle include:

- **Alcohol use.** Overconsumption raises your blood pressure and weight.
- **Blood pressure.** High blood pressure is a major risk factor. It can be controlled with medication and lifestyle changes.
- **Cholesterol and triglycerides.** High cholesterol can cause blockages in your arteries, as can high levels of triglycerides.
- **Smoking.** Nicotine raises blood pressure and hardens arteries, leading to a higher

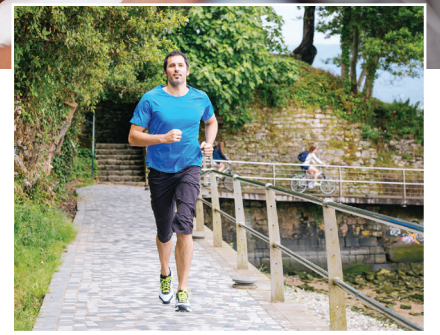
risk of having a cardiovascular event.

- **Stress.** Stress can raise blood pressure and even trigger heart failure. Poor coping mechanisms like overeating, smoking and drinking can further increase the risk of heart disease.
- **Weight.** Being overweight is linked to other risk factors, and obesity in itself can lead to heart failure.

HOW TO LOWER YOUR RISKS

Here are some steps you can take to lower your risk of heart disease:

- **Exercise.** This is one of the most effective things you can do. Regular exercise strengthens your heart, improves circulation, lowers blood pressure and cholesterol and helps you maintain a



- healthy weight.
- **Eliminate unhealthy habits.** Smoking and excessive drinking dramatically increase your risk of developing health issues, including heart disease.
- **Review your diet.** Eating healthier, particularly by consuming more fruits and vegetables and fewer processed foods, will help you keep your cholesterol and triglyceride levels down.
- **Sleep well.** Getting an adequate amount of sleep helps reduce stress and blood

pressure levels.

- **Monitor your health.** Keeping an eye on your blood pressure and cholesterol will allow you and your doctor to manage your risk.

Lifestyle factors play a huge role in heart disease. If you need help making changes, talk to your doctor.



Be a Healthier You in 2022!

SoutheastHEALTH
Always by your side.

We are here, by your side, to help you take the first step!

SoutheastHEALTH's multidisciplinary team of experts in heart, lung, and vascular care work together with you and your primary care provider to develop individualized treatment plans that are right for you. We also offer nutrition and exercise programs as well as free smoking cessation classes and health screenings.

Take the First Step...

Sign up for the "Healthier You in 2022" Challenge and be entered to win great prizes like a **Yeti® cooler** or **\$50 Visa® gift cards** each month through September 2022.



ENTER TO WIN AT sehealth.org/challenge

