

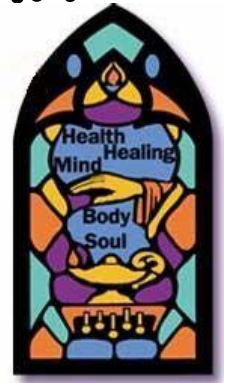
# The Faith Health Link



## Sowing Seeds of Wellness

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### Heart Disease in Black Women: Ring the Alarm

Heart disease is the number one cause of both death and disability in women in the U.S. As a Black woman, you have an even higher chance of dying from heart disease—and at a younger age—compared to white women, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

How big of a problem is this? About 49% of African American women over age 20 have some type of heart disease, like:

- Clogged arteries in the heart, arms, or legs.
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Angina (chest pain)

#### The American Heart Association (AHA) reports that:

- Only 36% of African American women are aware of the fact that heart disease is their biggest health risk.
- Only 20% of African American women think they personally are at risk for heart disease.

When it comes to high blood pressure, African Americans—both men and women—are diagnosed more often than any other group in the world. And when you break down the numbers by gender, more Black women have high blood pressure than Black men: 46.3% compared to 45%.

#### Why Heart Disease Is Such a Big Issue for Black Women

There are several reasons why heart disease tends to be such a big issue for African Americans generally, and Black women specifically.

Some of the biggest risk factors for heart disease tend to be more common in African Americans than in people of other races, says the AHA, and to take matters more complicated, these risk factors are often health problems in their own right.

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### Faith Health Ministry

#### Mission

Our mission is to develop a culturally, competent, Biblically informed, wellness ministry to meet the physical, mental, social-emotional, and spiritual needs through education, outreach and counseling that is affordable, accessible, and available.

#### Vision

The vision of Loudon Avenue Christian Church Faith Health Ministry is to address the needs of the congregation and community that promote wellness of the Body, Mind and Spirit, based upon the will of God in our lives.

“Create  
in me a  
clean heart,  
O God,  
and put a  
new and right  
spirit  
within me.”  
Psalm 51:10

For example, diabetes, high cholesterol, and obesity increase a person's risk of developing heart disease, and these are all issues that tend to be more common in African Americans as well.

Genetics can play a role in a person's risk level, too. According to the AHA, research suggests that a gene carried by many African Americans can make the body more sensitive to salt. This sensitivity can raise the risk of developing high blood pressure.

As with many health issues like diabetes and breast cancer, family history also matters. However, it is as straightforward as saying, "My mom had heart disease, so I'll have it eventually, too."

This is because you can get heart disease from your genes, and sometimes you can also get it from picking up unhealthy habits from your parents, explains the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

#### **What You Can Do to Lower Your Risk of Heart Disease**

Fortunately, while the numbers and risk factors do not paint the prettiest picture of heart health in Black women, there are lots of easy steps you can take to turn your risk around.

A good place to start is in the mirror. You and your everyday habits are the key to preventing heart disease. The CDC recommends adopting heart-healthy habits, such as:

- Making sure your diet includes lots of fruits, vegetables, and fiber.
- Aiming for a diet low in sodium, sugar, saturated and trans fats, and cholesterol
- Staying active with 150 minutes of activity every week (walking, bike riding, etc.)
- Not smoking or using other tobacco products
- Limiting the amount of alcohol, you drink

Finding out if heart disease runs in your family is another important step to take toward getting heart healthy.

And, of course, talking to your doctor about your heart disease risk is always a good idea. Together, you can come up with an action plan to stop heart disease before it stops you.

## **Your Heart Health and God**

***"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Proverbs 4:23***

The above information is what the medical profession suggests we all do to care for our heart in the physical realm of our "heart health." You can also make a spiritual commitment to address the spiritual dimensions of caring for your heart as well. We need to – trust, love and obey God. The greatest commandment that God, our Creator, has given us is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love others as yourself. Mark 12:28-31

When we come to the point where we love God from the bottom of our heart, it can change us completely. When we receive his love and forgiveness for all the things we've done wrong – all our sins – we can experience his deep love. When we trust him completely, we can know real peace. When we make a choice to believe that the Bible is truth and then try deep in our hearts to follow his principles for living found in the Bible, we can experience the full life that he desires for all of us to live. This includes having a healthy spiritual heart as well as a healthy physical heart.

***"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones." Proverbs 14:30***

[Heart Disease In Black Women: The Big Issue You Might Not Know About - Black Women's Health Imperative \(bwhi.org\)](#)

### **Exercise to steward the earthly tent God has given you.**

**Keeping our hearts pumping** and our bodies strong will enable us to keep going, even as we age. Just as God gives us money to use wisely, relationships to invest in diligently, and time to use efficiently, so he gives us a body to steward well. We honor our Creator when we care for the bodies entrusted to us through exercise and eating nutritious food.

Whether you carve out twenty minutes each day or an hour a few days each week, make a habit of fighting for joy in Christ through the habit of exercise. Regular exercise is worth so much more than a flat stomach or a smaller waist size. It can be a pathway toward deeper love and joy in our heavenly Father.

## COVID-19 vs. Flu vs. RSV: How to Tell the Difference Between Respiratory Infections



A respiratory tract infection is an infection of the lungs, airways, sinuses, or throat. While respiratory infections occur year-round, there is a significant increase in these infections during the fall and winter months (cold and flu season) when people tend to spend more time inside. During cold and flu season, it helps to know the common symptoms and how to avoid spreading illness to those around you. With the increasing cases of COVID-19, understanding the difference between common respiratory infections and your treatment options is even more important. In this blog, we provide information to help you prepare for the upcoming respiratory virus season.

### What is the difference between the flu, COVID-19, and RSV?

The flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are all highly contagious respiratory infections caused by **viruses**: The flu by influenza virus, COVID-19 by SARS-CoV-2 virus, and RSV by respiratory syncytial virus. It is possible for a person to be infected with multiple viruses at the same time.

### What causes the flu?

The flu is caused by the influenza virus and spreads easily during the winter months when people spend time together indoors. There are many strains of influenza virus, and the virus can change from year to year, which is why you should get a flu vaccine each year.

### What causes COVID-19?

COVID-19 is caused by SARS-CoV-2, a new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a family of viruses named for their corona-like shape. Sometimes, the general term

“coronavirus” is used with COVID-19, but this is technically incorrect because there are many types of coronaviruses in this family, including SARS-CoV-1 which emerged in 2002 and **other coronaviruses** that commonly infect humans.

### What causes RSV?

RSV is caused by the **respiratory syncytial virus**, a highly contagious virus that can infect children and adults. In adults and older children, RSV is typically a mild illness very similar to the common cold. In infants and the elderly, the symptoms can be more severe.

### How do I determine if I have COVID-19 or the flu?

Since the symptoms are so similar, the best way to accurately determine whether you have COVID-19, or the flu is to get tested.

### How do I prevent the flu, COVID-19, and RSV?

You can drastically decrease your odds of contracting the flu by getting a flu shot. There are many locations to get the vaccine including from your local provider, pharmacies, and grocery stores. The flu shot you get each year is designed to protect against that year’s anticipated most common strains of flu.

Engaging in proper hygiene practices with your baby can reduce the risk of infections including RSV. Avoid placing your baby in contact with anyone who exhibits symptoms of the common cold, wash your hands regularly, and do not let anyone smoke around your baby.

You can reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 by getting vaccinated and following **CDC guidelines**. It is always important to wash or sanitize your hands regularly.

[COVID-19 vs. Flu vs. RSV: How to tell the difference between respiratory infections | Labcorp](#)

### Are my COVID tests still effective?

Evidence shows that COVID tests will still work if they have not passed the expiration date printed on the package. Testing has shown that the home test remain effective longer than originally believed. You can check with the FDA (DICE@FDA.HHS.GOV; 800.638.2041 or 301.796.7100) to find out whether your test’s expiration date has been extended.

Home antigen tests are very good. However, they are less sensitive than molecular (PCR) tests you get at a clinic or hospital, they still detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus

about 80% of the time. Home antigen tests are more accurate in patients who have symptoms, compared to those who do not have symptoms.

To help reduce your risk of getting a false negative result, the FDA recommends using serial (repeat) testing. If you have no symptoms when you take an antigen test and get a negative result, you should take another antigen test 48 hours after the first result. If the second test is also negative, it is recommended to take a third test after another 48 hours.

If you have symptoms when you start testing, the FDA recommends one repeated antigen test 48 hours after an initial negative result.

**If you test positive** with an antigen test, it's very likely that you have COVID and there's no need to test again. The evidence so far shows that false positives from antigen tests are rare. After a positive test, recommendations remain the same.

#### **After a positive test:**

Isolate, Isolate from family members. Stay in a separate room and mask. Stay hydrated and monitor your symptoms. If they worsen, call your care provider, or seek help. If someone develops increasing shortness of breath and/or chest pain, you need to be seen then. Otherwise, if symptoms are mild, rest up and hydrate and isolate.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends you isolate for 10 days and you can be around others once you've gone 24 hours with no fever without taking fever-reducing medications and your other symptoms are improving.

We cannot stop COVID without you. More than 90% of all COVID inpatients are unvaccinated or due for a booster. This is preventable, but only if we work together.

**Get vaccinated and boosted. If you feel sick stay home. Wear a mask in public indoor settings. The Power is in Your Hands! Together, Let's Stop COVID.**

[Are my COVID tests still effective? | health enews \(ahchealthnews.com\)](https://www.ahchealthnews.com)

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## Soup for Seniors Drive



Winter is a very difficult time for our older homebound neighbors and the choice between food, medicine and heat can be hard. **LACC Faith In Action Ministry**, an arm of our Faith Health Ministry, is once again partnering with LOA to help our neighbors in need by collecting Soup, Crackers, Ramen Noodles, Canned Meats (such as Tuna, Chicken, Vienna Sausages), Canned Vegetables, Canned Fruit, Peanut Butter/Jelly, Oatmeal/Cream of Wheat, Cereal/Cereal Bars, Carnation Instant Breakfast, Ensure/Boost. Low-salt nutritious items are preferred (no glass containers, please check expiration dates) and other non-perishable items for the Annual Soup for Senior Drive. This collection helps to provide a hot meal on a cold day and reminds them that in the bleakest part of the winter the community has not forgotten them.

Due to the pandemic more seniors than ever before are homebound and in need of these supplement resources. **Our drive will begin on Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>. Boxes to receive your donations will be placed at both entrances of the church.**

LACC FAMILY, let's increase our giving this year. Last year we **collected and donated five-hundred fifteen (515) non-perishable** items. If you have any question please contact Minister Eva Hughes at the church, 540.342.8852

