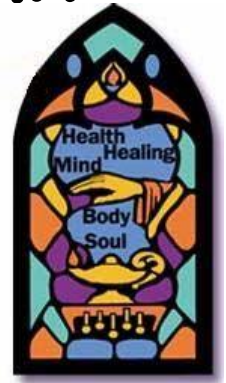


The Faith Health Link



Sowing Seeds of Wellness

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Wear Red Day is an event held each first Sunday of February at Loudon Avenue Christian Church, dedicated to raising awareness about heart disease in women. It is the leading cause of death among women in the U.S. That is why it is crucial for women to take charge and be proactive in their heart health.

What is heart disease?

Heart disease is caused by a variety of issues that can affect your heart. When people think about heart disease, they often think of the most common type —coronary artery disease (CAD) and the heart attacks it can cause. A heart attack occurs when the blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked by a blood clot. If this clot cuts off the blood flow completely, the part of the heart muscle supplied by that artery begins to die. But you can have trouble with various parts of your heart, like your heart muscle, valves, or electrical system.

When your heart is not working well, it has trouble sending enough blood oxygen and nutrients to your body. In a way, your heart delivers the fuel that keeps your body's systems running. If there is a problem with delivering that fuel, it affects everything your body's systems do.

Lifestyle changes and medications can keep your heart healthy and lower your chances of getting heart disease. Continue page 2.

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.

Take Good Care of Yourself Every Day!

- ❖ Give Thanks
- ❖ Exercise your body and mind; walk, stretch
- ❖ Smile
- ❖ Drink 8 glasses of water
- ❖ Eat 5 vegetables/fruit and lots of fiber
- ❖ Laugh
- ❖ Give someone a hug!

Knowledge is power. If you understand the risks for heart attack, you can take steps to improve your health.

What are the risk factors for heart disease?

Risk factors are traits and lifestyle habits that can increase your chance of having a heart attack. So, it is important to know them. Some risk factors that cannot be changed are family history, sex at birth or age. However, you can take plenty of other steps to lower your risk of heart disease. The first step is to talk to your health care professional, which can help you reduce, control, or prevent as many risk factors as you can. They may recommend healthy changes to your daily habits, prescribe medication, or both.

If you do not have a primary care physician, you may be able to see someone at a clinic in your community. (i.e., New Horizons Healthcare located at 3716 Melrose Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24017. 540/362-0363

You can help prevent heart disease by following a heart-healthy lifestyle. Here are strategies to help you protect your heart.

Get started with these tips to boost your heart health:

1. Don't smoke or use tobacco

One of the best things you can do for your heart is to stop smoking or using smokeless tobacco. Even if you are not a smoker, be sure to stay away from secondhand smoke.

Chemicals in tobacco can damage the heart and blood vessels. Cigarette smoke lowers the oxygen in the blood, which raises blood pressure and heart rate. That is because the heart must work harder to supply enough oxygen to the body and brain. **No matter how long or how much you smoked, you will start reaping rewards as soon as you quit.**

2. Get moving: Aim for at least 30 to 60 minutes of activity daily.

Regular, daily physical activity can lower the risk of heart disease. Physical activity helps control your weight. It also lowers the chances of getting other conditions that may put a strain on the heart. These include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and

type 2 diabetes. If you are not active now, get started by simply sitting less and moving more.

3. Eat a heart-healthy diet

A healthy diet can help protect the heart, improve blood pressure and cholesterol, and lower the risk of type 2 diabetes. A heart-healthy eating plan includes:

- Vegetables and fruits.
- Beans or other legumes.
- Lean meat and fish.
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy foods.
- Whole grains.
- Healthy fats such as olive oil and avocado.

Take in less of the following:

- Salt or high-sodium meals.
- Sugar or sweetened beverages.
- Highly refined carbohydrates.
- Alcohol.
- Highly processed food, such as processed meats.
- Saturated fat, which is found in red meat, full-fat dairy products, palm oil and coconut oil.
- Trans fat, which is found in some fried fast food, chips, and baked goods.

4. Maintain a healthy weight

Being overweight — especially around the middle of the body — raises the risk of heart disease. Extra weight can lead to conditions that raise the chances of getting heart disease. These conditions include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes.

Waist circumference also can be a useful tool to measure how much belly fat you have. The risk of heart disease is higher if the waist measurement is greater than:

- 40 inches (101.6 centimeters, or cm) for men.
- 35 inches (88.9 cm) for women.

Even a small weight loss can be good for you. Reducing weight by just 3% to 5% can help lower certain fats in the blood called triglycerides. It can lower blood sugar, also called glucose. Additionally, it can cut the risk of type 2 diabetes. Losing even more helps lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels.

5. Get quality sleep

People who do not get enough sleep have a higher risk of obesity, high blood pressure, heart attack, diabetes, and depression.

Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep each night. Children usually need more. So, make sure you get enough rest. Set a sleep schedule and stick to it. To do that, go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. Keep your bedroom dark and quiet too, so it is easier to sleep.

6. Manage stress

Ongoing stress can play a role in higher blood pressure and other risk factors for heart disease. Some people also cope with stress in unhealthy ways. For example, they may overeat, drink, or smoke. You can boost your health by finding other ways to manage stress. Healthy tactics include physical activity, relaxation exercises, mindfulness, yoga, and meditation.

If stress becomes overwhelming, get a health care checkup. Ongoing stress may be linked with mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. These conditions also are tied to heart disease risk factors, including higher blood pressure and less blood flow to the heart. If you think you might have depression or anxiety, it is important to get treatment.

7. Get regular health screening test.

High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage the heart and blood vessels. However, if you do not get checked for these conditions, you will not know whether you have them. Regular screening tests can tell you what your numbers are and whether you need to take action.

Manage your blood sugar.

Diabetes is a risk factor for myocardial infarction or heart attack. By managing your blood sugar, you reduce your risk factor for diabetes, thus, for cardiovascular issues.

Manage your blood pressure. High blood pressure means your heart has to work harder to pump blood through your arteries. Maintaining a healthy weight, limiting salt intake, and following healthy lifestyle habits can maintain healthy blood pressure levels, but blood pressure is easy to measure,

so know your numbers in case you need medication to help treat high blood pressure. Control your cholesterol.

Eating a healthy, low-salt diet can help control cholesterol levels. **High cholesterol** can reduce blood flow through your arteries, which can cause further health complications. Medications can be very effective in helping lower cholesterol as well.

If you have a condition such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes, talk with your health care team. Your doctor may prescribe medicines and recommend lifestyle changes. Make sure to take your medicines exactly as prescribed and follow a healthy-lifestyle plan.

8. Take steps to prevent infections

Certain infections may lead to heart problems. For instance, gum disease may be a risk factor for heart and blood vessel diseases. So, brush and floss daily. Get regular dental checkups too.

Other illnesses caused by infections can make existing heart problems worse. Vaccines help protect against infectious diseases. So, stay up to date on the following shots:

- Yearly flu vaccine.
- COVID-19 vaccine, which lowers the chances of getting very sick.
- Pneumococcal vaccine, which reduces the risk of certain illnesses caused by bacteria.
- Tdap vaccine, which protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.

Ask your health care professional if you need any other vaccines too. [Heart disease prevention: Strategies to keep your heart healthy - Mayo Clinic](#)



Mental Health and Heart Health

For years, health care professionals thought the connection between mental health and heart health was strictly behavioral — such as a person who's feeling down seeking relief by smoking, drinking or eating unhealthily.

That thinking has started to change. Research shows possible physiological connections, too. Increasing evidence shows that biological and chemical factors that trigger mental health issues may also influence heart disease.

Having mental health issues isn't just about being unhappy; it's having biochemical changes that predispose people to have other health issues, including heart problems. So the head-heart connection should be an important consideration in patient care.

Depression and Other Issues

Many forms of mental health issues can affect heart disease. You can have a temporary state of depression or a more severe, clinical case. You can also have varying levels of anxiety and stress, just to name a few of the most well-known problems.

Daily stressors, such as those related to work and traumatic incidents can increase the risk of heart disease. Social isolation and loneliness — common sources of stress — are also linked to increased risk of heart attack or stroke.

Heart, Stroke Patients Must Be Wary

Heart disease or stroke can cause anxiety or depression. So, it's important to handle these in a healthy way.

It's not just that people with [heart disease](#) or [stroke](#) want to smoke or eat to boost their mood. They may not have the energy to get out of bed, go to rehab and do things to regain their physical health.

Some might think, "I just had a heart attack, I should be depressed." But minimizing their sadness, or dismissing it, could start them down a slippery slope.

What You Should Do

Start by discussing how you're feeling — physically and mentally — with your health care professional. They can help or refer you to the most appropriate care or provide the best place to start.

You should monitor the physical and mental health of yourself and your loved ones, especially those dealing with heart disease or stroke.

- Your health care professional may ask questions about your physical and mental health, such as:
- Are you still [smoking](#)?
- How are you doing with your diet?
- Are you checking your [blood pressure](#)?
- How's your mood been?
- Are you enjoying the same things that used to?

Remember, if you're depressed, anxious or stressed due to heart disease or stroke, you may need follow-up care. So work with your health care professional — for the sake of your mental and heart health. [Mental Health and Heart Health | American Heart Association](#)

Trust
IN
THE Lord
WITH ALL YOUR
Heart
PROVERBS 3:5

The information provided in this newsletter is for educational and informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice and is not intended to replace a consultation with an appropriately qualified provider.