

The Faith Health Link



Sowing Seeds of Wellness

Loudon Avenue Christian Church

Disciples of Christ (DOC)

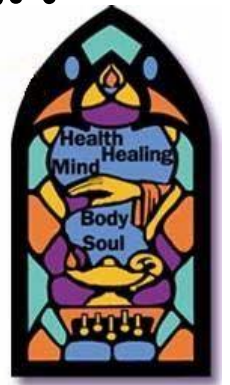
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Wear Red Day at Loudon Avenue Christian Church



Wear Red Day is an initiative of the American Heart Association, as a direct response to alarming statistics that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the US. Wear Red Day is recognized annually in the month of February. It is a time when all people are encouraged to focus on their cardiovascular health, especially women.

Targeted awareness is necessary because heart disease was historically considered a men's issue, leading to a lack of understanding about the unique risks women face. Symptoms of a heart attack can differ significantly between the sexes and are often dismissed or misunderstood, even by some medical professionals. While most women experience classic chest pain, if you have any of these signs, call 911 and get to a hospital right away.

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- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of your chest. It may last more than a few minutes or go away and come back.
- Pain or discomfort in one the:
 - Arms (one or both)
 - Back
 - Neck
 - Jaw
 - Stomach
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs, including:
 - Breaking out in a cold sweat
 - Nausea
 - Lightheadedness

Annually at Loudon Avenue Christian Church, the congregation supports Wear Red Day by wearing red, including women, men, and youth. This year, one of the female members shared her experience with the congregation, explaining how she was diagnosed with a heart attack after feeling pain in her upper shoulder.

High Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular Risk

An alarming one in three American adults has high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. Many people are unaware they have this condition because high blood pressure presents no symptoms or warning signs. However, when elevated blood pressure is combined with abnormal cholesterol and blood sugar levels, the damage to arteries, kidneys, and the heart increases significantly. Fortunately, high blood pressure is easy to detect and treat.

Be aware of factors that increase the risk of heart disease but **can be modified or controlled**:

- smoking
- high blood pressure
- obesity
- diabetes
- physical inactivity
- high cholesterol

There are also major risk factors that **cannot be changed**:

- Increasing age

Heredity (Including Race): African Americans have more severe high blood pressure than Caucasians and a higher risk of heart disease.

Protect yourself

- Know your numbers. The best way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked. You can measure your blood pressure at home, at church, or at public places that have blood pressure monitors, **but only a health care professional can diagnose high blood pressure.**
- Learn what could make you more likely to develop high blood pressure and other serious health problems.
- Make changes that matter. Take steps to reduce your risk and manage your blood pressure:
 - Make heart-healthy lifestyle changes.
 - Take your medication as prescribed.
 - Work with your health care professionals.

Understanding Blood Pressure Readings

Blood Pressure Categories

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 – 139	or	80 – 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

Your blood pressure numbers and what they mean

Your blood pressure is recorded as two numbers:

Systolic blood pressure is the first (top/upper) number. It measures the pressure your blood is pushing against your artery walls when the heart beats.

Diastolic blood pressure is the second (bottom/lower) number. It measures the pressure your blood is pushing against your artery walls while the heart muscle rests between beats.

February is Heart Health, Wear Red and Black History Month



The correlation of Heart Health, Wear Red Day and Black History is significant as heart disease has long been recognized as the leading cause of death among Black Americans. Black Americans are more than three times more likely to die from cardiovascular causes associated with hypertension compared to non-Hispanic White individuals. Henceforth, the focus of this newsletter.

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, can lead to serious health problems including heart attack or stroke. Measuring your blood pressure is the only way to know if you have it. Controlling high blood pressure can help prevent major health problems. **Should you register a high blood pressure reading, please see your provider/physician for follow-up and monitoring.**

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. [High Blood Pressure | American Heart Association](#)



American Heart Association.

Check. Change. Control.®

Consequences of High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure (HBP) is often the first domino in a chain or “domino effect” leading to devastating consequences, like:



STROKE

HBP can cause blood vessels in the brain to burst or clog more easily.

VISION LOSS

HBP can damage the vessels in the eyes.



HEART FAILURE

HBP can cause the heart to enlarge and fail to supply blood to the body.

HEART ATTACK

HBP damages arteries and causes them to narrow and stiffen.



SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION

This can be erectile dysfunction in men or lower libido in women.

KIDNEY DISEASE/ FAILURE

HBP can damage the arteries in the kidneys and interfere with their ability to effectively filter blood.



A simple **blood pressure check** is the first step to preventing the “domino effect.”

Learn more at heart.org/hbp.

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