



Heart Health

February is American Heart Month, a time to learn about heart disease, risk factors, and ways to maintain a healthy heart. Did you know heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the U.S. ⁽¹⁾?

Heart disease includes several conditions including coronary artery disease (CAD), heart failure, and abnormal heart rhythm. The most common heart condition in the U.S. is CAD ⁽¹⁾.

CAD occurs when the blood vessels that supply the heart become hard or narrow. This is caused by a buildup of cholesterol and other substances inside the blood vessels ⁽²⁾.

When blood flow and oxygen to the heart muscle is blocked, it can lead to a *heart attack*. Common symptoms of a heart attack include ⁽¹⁾:

- Feelings of pressure, squeezing, or pain in the chest
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea, dizziness, or sweating

According to the American Heart Association, there are several factors that

increase your risk of developing heart disease and suffering a heart attack. Common risk factors include ⁽³⁾:

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Lack of exercise
- Diabetes
- Excessive alcohol use
- Poor diet
- Stress

You can help reduce your risk of developing heart disease by taking the following steps ⁽¹⁾:

- Exercise
- Do not smoke
- Eat a healthy diet
- Limit alcohol use
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Lower your cholesterol
- Control your blood pressure

For more information on heart health, please visit the following web-links:

Heart Health Information:

- [Heart Health Nutrition Information](#)
- [Nutrition Calculator](#)
- [Physical Activity Information](#)
- [Heart Health for Kids](#)

References:

1. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
2. [U.S. National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health](#)
3. [American Heart Association](#)

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