



JULY 2025
YOUR HEART HEALTH

CARE CONNECTION

UNDERSTANDING HEART HEALTH: PROTECTING A MOST VITAL ORGAN



Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, but the good news is that many heart-related issues can be prevented with lifestyle changes. Whether you're young or old, it's never too early or too late to start caring for your heart.

WHY HEART HEALTH MATTERS

The heart is responsible for pumping blood throughout the body, delivering oxygen and nutrients to organs and tissues. However, when the heart is compromised, it can lead to conditions like coronary artery disease, heart attack, heart failure, and stroke. Several factors contribute to heart disease, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, poor diet, lack of physical activity, smoking, and stress.

KEY FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR A HEALTHY HEART

- **Exercise Regularly**
Physical activity strengthens the heart muscle, helps maintain healthy blood flow, and reduces the risk of high blood pressure and cholesterol. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise each week.
- **Eat a Heart-Healthy Diet**
A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins supports heart health. Focus on healthy fats like those found in avocados, olive oil, and nuts, and limit saturated fats, trans fats, and processed foods. Remember to reduce sodium intake to manage blood pressure.
- **Maintain a Healthy Weight**
Carrying excess weight, especially around the abdomen, increases the risk of developing heart disease. Eating a balanced diet and staying active can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- **Don't Smoke and Limit Alcohol**
Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease as it damages blood vessels and raises blood pressure.

If you smoke, consider quitting. Likewise, excessive alcohol intake can increase blood pressure and contribute to heart disease. Moderation is key; aim for no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men.

- **Manage Stress**

Chronic stress can contribute to heart disease by raising blood pressure and increasing inflammation. Practicing stress-reducing techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or spending time with loved ones can improve your overall well-being.

- **Know Your Numbers**

Regularly monitor your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and blood sugar. High blood pressure is often called the silent killer because it shows no symptoms but can lead to serious heart problems. Keeping track of your numbers and working with your healthcare provider to manage them is crucial.

- **Get Enough Sleep**

Poor sleep quality and sleep deprivation are linked to higher rates of heart disease. Aim for 7 to 9 hours of restful sleep each night. If you have trouble sleeping, consider adjusting your sleep environment or discussing sleep issues with your healthcare provider.

THE POWER OF PREVENTION

Preventing heart disease is far more effective than treating it after it develops. Even small lifestyle changes can make a big difference in your heart health. Many lifestyle choices that protect the heart also benefit the brain. Take time this month to assess your habits, talk to your doctor, and create a plan that works for you. Remember, every step you take toward a healthier lifestyle is a step toward a healthier heart.

If you're unsure where to start, consider setting manageable goals like walking for 10 minutes a day or swapping one unhealthy snack for a fruit or vegetable and gradually build from there.

Your heart will thank you!

Sources: Heart.org, CDC

WELLNESS TIP!

BE PROACTIVE WITH PREVENTIVE CARE

We're more than halfway through the year — have you gotten your annual wellness exam yet? Consider this your reminder!

Be proactive about your health and talk to your primary care provider about any concerns you have or new issues you're experiencing. At your annual physical, your provider will help to make sure you are up-to-date on recommended immunizations and screenings for your age and gender.



And remember: FMCP covers a wide range of [preventive and wellness services](#) designed to keep you and your dependents healthy, at 100% of the allowable charge with no deductible or co-pay when rendered by a PPO or Non-PPO provider.

Source: RUSH.edu

DID YOU KNOW? PARTICIPANT ADVOCACY COMMITTEE (PAC)

As part of our promise to deliver a premier participant experience, FMCP has established a Participant Advocacy Committee (PAC) that is comprised of clinical experts and healthcare benefit professionals.

This committee serves as a vital link between FMCP's healthcare vendor partners and your healthcare providers. The PAC is dedicated to helping you navigate the many complexities of the US healthcare system while ensuring that you receive the support, assistance, and guidance you deserve.

CARDIAC ARREST VS. HEART ATTACK

People often use these terms interchangeably, but they are not the same.

WHAT IS CARDIAC ARREST?

In a **CARDIAC ARREST** the heart suddenly stops beating. This is usually caused by an electrical problem that makes the heart beat irregularly.

When the heart stops pumping, it can't send blood to the brain, lungs and other vital organs.

WHAT HAPPENS

Someone having a cardiac arrest may become unresponsive. They may stop breathing or only gasp for air.

If they don't get help right away, they can die.

WHAT TO DO



If someone has cardiac arrest, doing CPR right away can double or triple their chances of survival.

1. **First, call 911** (or local emergency response number).
2. **Then start CPR.** If there's an automated external defibrillator (AED) nearby, use it as soon as you can.

If two people are helping, one should start CPR. The other should call 911 and find the AED.

Every minute counts. The odds for survival drop by 10% each minute without help. Emergency staff can also help revive someone whose heart has stopped.

For more information on American Heart Association CPR, including training classes in your area, go to heart.org/NATION.

Follow us: @American_Heart



WHAT IS A HEART ATTACK?

In a **HEART ATTACK**, blood can't get to part of the heart because a key blood vessel is blocked.

If this circulation problem isn't cleared quickly, the part of the heart that isn't getting enough blood can start to die.

WHAT HAPPENS

Heart attack symptoms can be sudden. They may include:

- Severe chest pain
- Discomfort in other parts of the upper body
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweats
- Feeling sick to the stomach

Sometimes, symptoms start slowly and last for hours or days. Unlike cardiac arrest, the heart usually keeps beating during a heart attack.

The longer it takes to get help, the greater the risk to the heart.



Anyone can have a heart attack. **In women, people with diabetes and older adults, symptoms might not be obvious.** For example, they might not include chest pain.

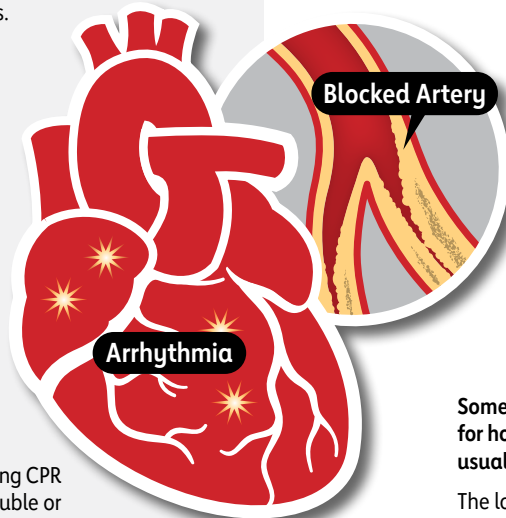
WHAT TO DO



Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, call your local emergency number. Every minute matters!

It's best to call your local emergency number to get to the emergency room right away.

Emergency medical services (EMS) staff can begin treatment when they arrive. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital, too.



WHAT IS THE LINK?

Most heart attacks don't lead to cardiac arrest. But a heart attack is a common cause when cardiac arrest does happen.

Other problems can also cause the heart to stop beating.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

PPO - Anthem

1-800-810-BLUE
(Provider locator services)
www.anthem.com

Rx Drugs - SavRx

1-866-233-4239
www.savrx.com

NECA/IBEW Family Medical Care Plan

1-877-937-9602

www.nifmcp.com

410 Chickamauga Avenue, Suite 301
Rossville, GA 30741

Dental - Delta Dental

1-855-277-4526
www.deltadentalins.com
(if applicable)

Vision - VSP

1-800-877-7195
www.vsp.com
(if applicable)