

FEBRUARY 2020:

# FIRST HEART AWARENESS MONTH OF THE DECADE

**Every 37 seconds**, someone in the United States dies from heart disease. Black, white, male, female: cardiovascular disease does not discriminate. It's actually the leading cause of death in the U.S., responsible for one out of every four deaths. Since 1964, February has been designated **American Heart Month**, a.k.a. heart awareness month. With this year's event—the first in a new decade—why not make this the year to stay healthy and reduce your risk of heart disease? **Find out what you can do to be heart healthy in 2020.**



## HOW DO YOUR RISKS STACK UP?

Health conditions, lifestyle, age and family history all play a part in your likelihood to get heart disease. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), **approximately 47 percent** of Americans have at least one risk factor for heart disease.

## WHICH HEALTH CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTE TO A HIGHER RISK OF HEART DISEASE?

Higher cholesterol, higher blood pressure and smoking all up your risk for heart disease. Diabetics or those living with obesity are at additional risk for developing cardiovascular disease.



## DOES WHAT I EAT OR DRINK INCREASE MY RISK?

You've probably been told that your **eating habits** correlate to certain health conditions. If you regularly consume foods that are high in saturated fats, trans fat, cholesterol and salt, you're not doing your heart any favors. Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure and triglycerides (fatty substance in the blood).



## ISN'T HEART DISEASE HEREDITARY?

Heredity certainly can play a role, but it's also likely that people with a family history of heart disease share some common environments and factors that can up their chances. Smoking, poor eating habits and lack of exercise are some of them. Combine heredity and these factors, and your risk increases.



## WHAT ABOUT AGE, RACE AND SEX?

Although heart disease can occur at any time, the risk increases with age. The risk is the same for men and women

and most ethnic groups, but **African American men** are more susceptible to heart disease than others.



## HOW CAN I STAY HEART HEALTHY?

Recognizing the risk factors is the first step heart-healthy life. Here are some things you can do to keep your heart healthy:

- Avoid smoking (and second-hand smoke)
- Stay active (exercise moderately most days)
- Eat a healthy diet (that includes lots of fruits and vegetables and limited processed foods)
- Know your numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose)
- Limit alcohol consumption (no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 for men)

**Remember to move with heart:** be aware of heart disease risks and what you can do to stay healthy.



## Thinking about a career in health care?

Consider one of the allied health programs offered at **Coyne College Chicago**. Train to become a medical assistant, pharmacy technician or medical coding and billing specialist.

