

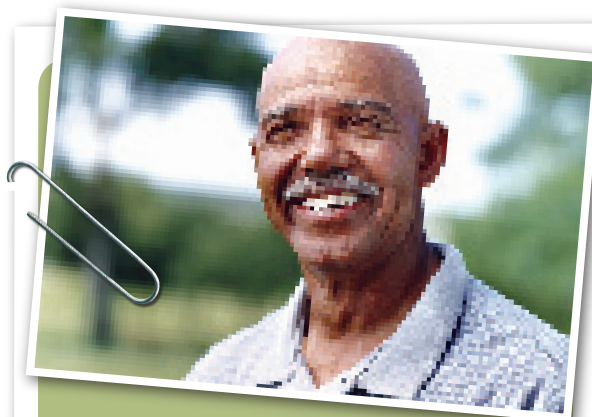
One Healthy Life

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) ranks as the number one killer of African Americans, claiming the lives of 36.3 percent of the more than 291,000 blacks who die each year. Cancer follows, killing 21.5 percent. All other causes of death account for about 42 percent. African Americans are 29 percent more likely to die from heart disease than non Hispanic whites. The mission of the African American Health Program is to help to eliminate the health disparity of cardiovascular disease in the Black population of Montgomery County, Md. There are multiple causes of cardiovascular disease, but also multiple ways to prevent and manage it.

FACTS

- Gender and genes make a difference. Males are more likely to have coronary heart disease than females, whether younger or older.
- A smoker's risk of heart attack is more than twice that of a nonsmoker, and a smoker's risk of stroke is two to four times that of a nonsmoker.
- High cholesterol levels bring increased risk. As LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol) levels increase, CVD risk increases. When other risk factors are present, risk increases even more. A person's cholesterol levels are also affected by age, sex, heredity, and diet.
- Blood pressure is the pressure of the blood in your arteries. Arteries are the blood vessels that carry blood away from your heart and throughout your body. High blood pressure increases the heart's workload and can lead to increased arterial damage, opening the door further for more build-up of fatty substances on the arterial walls. This causes the artery walls to narrow and lose flexibility. This in turn causes an increase in blood pressure.



ONE HEALTHY LIFE: *Joseph*

"A blood pressure exam wasn't exactly on my shopping list that day, but when I saw the African American Health Program giving free screenings at my local supermarket, I lined up for an exam. It was quick and painless—and surprising. A follow-up appointment indicated that I was at risk for cardiovascular disease. Armed with information and support from the AAHP, I took action to quit smoking, improve my diet, and get more exercise. Today, my numbers—and my life—are headed in the right direction."

RESOURCES

American Heart Association

P: 1-800-242-8721

American Stroke Association

P: 1-888-478-7653

American Heart Association

www.americanheart.org

American Stroke Association

www.StrokeAssociation.org

Black Healthcare.com

www.Blackhealthcare.com

Association of Black Cardiologists

www.ABCardio.org

www.Montgomerycountymd.gov

- High blood pressure is also the biggest risk factor for stroke. When high blood pressure exists with obesity, smoking, high blood cholesterol levels, or diabetes, the risk of heart attack or stroke increases several times.
- Obesity, a lack of physical activity, and diabetes are closely linked risk factors. Those who are overweight are more likely to develop heart disease and stroke even if they have no other risk factors.
- Stress is also a contributing factor. Research indicates that there is a relationship between the risk of developing coronary heart disease and stress.
- Nearly 5 of every 10 non-Hispanic black adults have CVD.* This includes diseases of the heart, stroke, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, congenital cardiovascular defects, hardening of the arteries and other diseases of the circulatory system.
- Nearly 45 percent of black adults in the United States have high blood pressure (HBP), one of the highest rates in the world. Compared with whites, blacks are more likely to have HBP, to be overweight or obese, and to have diabetes. All these factors raise their CVD risk.
- The age-adjusted 2004 death rate from coronary heart disease (CHD), which includes heart attack, was over 23 percent higher among black adults than for the total adult population in the United States.

PREVENTION

- Don't use tobacco! It is the number one preventable cause of serious illness such as heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and emphysema.
- Be physically active. Walking just 30 minutes per day at a brisk pace can help to build endurance, control blood pressure, reduce cholesterol levels, aid in weight control, and reduce your risk of developing diabetes.
- Eat heart healthy foods. Foods high in fat contribute to arteriosclerosis, which is a build-up of cholesterol and other fatty substances in the large and medium sized blood vessels. This decreases the flow of blood to major organs and is a primary cause of heart attack and stroke.
- Watch your weight.
- Avoid excessive alcohol consumption. Heavy drinking can contribute to high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE: AFRICAN AMERICAN HEALTH PROGRAM

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onehealthylife.org