



# Make Healthy Choices!

## The Heart Truth

We need an urgent wake up call!

*“With the many risk factors for heart disease, **our greatest risk is ignorance.** So I encourage everyone of you to go home, pull out your favorite red dress and tell every woman you know that heart disease doesn’t care what you wear.”*

*- First Lady Laura Bush*

The Heart Truth is that heart disease is the #1 killer of American Men & Women. We must take the necessary steps to prevent this killer!

### 1. Don’t Smoke or use Tobacco Products

If you smoke, quit. According to Mayo Clinic cardiologists, “this is the most powerful, preventable risk factor for heart disease.” It is time to stop thinking “someday I will quit” and do it now. The good news is that when you quit smoking, your risk of heart disease drops dramatically within just one year. You’ll start reaping rewards as soon as you quit.

### 2. Exercise

This one will never go away. We must exercise. Federal guidelines recommend 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical exercise most days of the week. But even shorter amounts of exercise offer heart benefits. Take the stairs. Walk the dog. Increase your intensity, duration and frequency over time to achieve maximum health benefits. Exercise can reduce your

risk of fatal heart disease by 25%!

### 3. Heart-healthy Diet

A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products can help protect your heart. Watch your fats, especially saturated fat and trans fat. Remember, heart-healthy eating isn’t just about cutting back. Most people need to add more fruits and vegetables to their diet with a goal of five to ten servings per day. Talk to your physician about a heart healthy diet.

### 4. Maintain Healthy Weight

Even small reductions can be beneficial. Reducing your weight by just 10% can decrease your blood pressure, lower your blood cholesterol level and reduce your risk of diabetes.

### 5. Regular Health Screenings

Have your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked so you will know what your numbers are and whether you need to take action!

### Symptoms

The most common symptom of a heart attack in both men and women is some type of pain, pressure or discomfort in the chest. But it is not always severe or even the most prominent symptom, particularly in women. Women are more likely to have:

- Neck, shoulder, upper-back or abdominal discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sweating
- Lightheaded or dizziness
- Unusual fatigue

If you experience any of these symptoms,

**Seek medical help immediately!**

For more information, visit:

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth)

[www.womansheartday.org](http://www.womansheartday.org)



**Note: This information is meant to complement the advice of your health care providers, not to replace it. Talk to your doctor if you have any health care concerns.**

**Remember: Every Health Plan has benefits and exclusions. Take time to become familiar with your Plan!**

