

FEBRUARY 16, 2022

MCHD HEALTH BLOG

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Public Health
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MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



HEART DISEASE

The month of February isn't just for lovers. It's also American Heart Month! The Morgan County Health Department wants you to take care of your heart this month and throughout the rest of the year.

Did you know your lifestyle can increase your risk for heart disease? According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the term "heart disease" refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type of heart disease in the United States is coronary artery disease, which affects the blood flow to the heart. When there is decreased blood flow to the heart, it can cause a heart attack. It is important to be aware of the risk factors leading to heart disease. Risk factors include eating a diet high in saturated fats, trans fat, and cholesterol. Additionally, using too much salt (sodium) in the diet can raise blood pressure.

Another factor that can lead to heart disease is not getting enough physical activity (CDC, 2022). Low physical activity can also increase the chances of having other medical conditions that are risk factors; including obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Getting regular physical activity can lower your risk for heart disease. You should always check with your doctor before you begin to exercise.

Did you know drinking too much alcohol is also a risk factor? Drinking too much can raise blood pressure levels and increase the risk for heart disease. Having too much alcohol in your system also elevates levels of triglycerides, a fatty substance in the blood that is also a risk factor. According to the CDC, women should have no more than one drink a day, and men shouldn't have more than two drinks a day.

Lastly, tobacco use increases the risk for heart disease and heart attack. Cigarette smoking can damage the heart and blood vessels, which increases your risk for heart disease. Exposure to secondhand smoke can also increase the risk for heart disease, even for nonsmokers (CDC, 2022). Our medical director, Richard D. Clark, MD wants to remind everyone that the use of e-cigarettes (vaping), chewing tobacco and snuff also increase your risk.

There's so much more to learn about heart disease. Please visit www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/ for more information and resources to help you live a heart-healthy life.