

## February's Topic: Heart Healthy

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### HEALTHCARE CLINIC HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday,  
Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Thursday  
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Phone: (334) 263-8470  
Fax: (334) 263-8670  
Email: hcc@alseib.org

### PHARMACY HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday,  
Friday  
7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Thursday  
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Phone: (334) 263-8460  
Fax: (334) 263-8660  
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## February 6<sup>th</sup> is National Wear Red Day!

Although it is 80% preventable, heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Historically, heart disease has been predominantly associated with men, however, it is not just a man's disease. In fact, heart disease and stroke kill 1 in every 3 women.<sup>1</sup> Although heart disease is the number one killer of women and is more deadly than all forms of cancer, women often attribute their symptoms to less life-threatening conditions like acid reflux, the flu, or normal aging. In 2004, to help unveil the myths and raise awareness of heart disease, the American Heart Association created the Go Red for Women initiative to empower women to take charge of their heart health. Go Red for Women encourages mindfulness of the issue of women and heart disease and encourages action to save more lives.<sup>2,3</sup>

"We Go Red for Women to fight heart disease because no one should fight alone." – Unknown



American  
Heart  
Association®  
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## What is Heart Disease?

- The term "heart disease" includes several types of heart conditions.
- Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the most common heart disease in the United States. CAD occurs when the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle become hardened and narrowed due to the buildup of a substance called plaque. The narrowing and buildup of plaques is called atherosclerosis. Plaques are a mixture of fatty and other substances including cholesterol and other lipids. Blood flow to the heart is reduced, which reduces the supply of oxygen to the heart muscle.<sup>4,5</sup>
  - Nearly 720,000 Americans suffer from a heart attack yearly
    - Of these, 515,000 are a first heart attack while 205,000 happen in people who have already had a heart attack<sup>5</sup>
- Stroke can occur when a clot formed by a ruptured plaque interrupts blood flow through a vessel that feeds the brain
  - More than 795,000 Americans suffer from a stroke yearly<sup>6</sup>
- Additional types of heart disease include chest pains or angina, heart failure, and arrhythmias or an irregularly beating heart.
- Some people are born with an abnormality in the heart's structure (termed congenital heart disease).
  - Congenital heart defects may cause symptoms at birth, during childhood, or not until adulthood. Other congenital defects may produce no symptoms at all.<sup>7</sup>

### What is the burden of heart disease in America?<sup>4</sup>

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death and a major cause of disability, preventing Americans from working and enjoying activities with family.
- Heart disease kills **more than 600,000 people** in the U.S. annually—**1 in every 4** of all U.S. deaths.
  - Coronary artery disease accounts for **380,000** of these deaths annually

### What is the cost of heart disease for our nation?<sup>4</sup>

- Heart disease and stroke are among the most costly health problems facing the U.S. today.
- Together, heart disease and stroke account for **more than \$300 billion** in health care services, medications, and lost productivity each year
  - CAD alone costs the U.S. **\$109 billion** each year
- The costs are rising.

## Are you at risk for developing heart disease?<sup>8</sup>

Some conditions as well as some lifestyle factors can put people at a higher risk for developing heart disease. Becoming aware of your risk factors is important as it is never too late to take steps to prevent heart disease.

- **Heredity:** heart disease can run in the family; genetic factors play a role
- **Tobacco use:** cigarette smoking promotes atherosclerosis, nicotine raises blood pressure, and carbon monoxide reduces the amount of oxygen the blood can carry; secondhand smoke can increase heart disease risk for nonsmokers
- **Diet:** diets high in saturated fats and cholesterol promote atherosclerosis; high sodium diets raise blood pressure levels
- **Alcohol:** excessive intake leads to increase blood pressure and increases heart disease risk; increases triglycerides which contribute to atherosclerosis
- **Physical inactivity:** impacts factors including obesity, high blood pressure, high triglycerides, a low level of HDL (good) cholesterol, and diabetes
- **Obesity:** linked to higher LDL (bad) cholesterol and triglyceride levels and lower HDL (good) cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, and diabetes
- **High cholesterol:** leads to narrowing of your arteries and reduced blood flow
- **High blood pressure:** high pressure causes damage to the arteries feeding the heart and increases risk
- **Uncontrolled diabetes:** sugar build up in the blood increases heart attack risk

## Strategies to Prevent Heart Disease<sup>9</sup>

You can help prevent heart disease by managing any medical conditions you may have and by making healthy choices.

- **Live a healthy lifestyle:**
  - **Eat a healthy diet.** Choose healthful meal and snacks. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables while limiting saturated fats and sodium.
  - **Maintain a healthy weight**
  - **Exercise regularly.** Engage in moderate-intensity exercise 150 minutes per week, or 30 minutes most days of the week.
  - **Stop smoking.** The chance of heart attack decreases 24 hours after quitting.
  - **Limit alcohol use**
- **Prevent or treat your medical conditions:**
  - **Have your cholesterol checked.**
  - **Monitor your blood pressure** on a regular basis since high blood pressure has no symptoms.
  - **Manage your diabetes.** Monitor your blood sugar levels closely.
  - **Take your medicine** as prescribed to treat high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and/or diabetes.
  - **Work together with your health care provider** to prevent or treat the medical conditions that lead to heart disease.

## What are the Warning Signs?

### How to Recognize a Heart Attack<sup>10</sup>

- **Chest pain or discomfort**
  - Often involve discomfort in the center of the chest that goes away and comes back or that lasts more than a few minutes
  - May feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain
- **Discomfort in other upper body areas**
  - May include discomfort or pain in one or both arms, the neck, back, jaw, or stomach
- **Shortness of breath**
  - Can occur with or without chest discomfort
- **Other signs**
  - May include nausea, breaking out in a cold sweat, or feeling weak, light-headed or faint
- **Symptoms in Women:**
  - Like men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. However, women are more likely than men to experience the other common symptoms—mainly the shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and jaw or back pain.
  - Additionally, heart attack signs can be subtler and sometimes confusing in women.

### How to Spot a Stroke<sup>11</sup>

- **Face drooping**
  - Sudden weakness of the face
  - One side of the face may droop or become numb
- **Weakness of the extremities**
  - Sudden numbness or weakness of the arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- **Speech difficulty**
  - Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or trouble understanding
- **Vision changes**
  - Sudden trouble seeing or blurred vision in one or both eyes
- **Loss of coordination**
  - Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance
- **Headache**
  - Sudden severe headache with no known cause

***Heart attack and stroke are life-and-death emergencies. Not all of these signs occur in every victim, and they may go away and return.***

***IF ANY OF THESE SIGNS ARE PRESENT, CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY.***

***In order to reduce disability and save lives, many of our medications today need to be given quickly after symptoms first appear. Even if you're not sure, have it checked out—tell a doctor about your symptoms.***

***Don't delay... get help right away!***

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## State Wellness Center

101 S. Union Street  
Montgomery, AL 36104

All active employees, covered spouses of active employees, non-Medicare retirees and covered non-Medicare spouses of retirees that use the State Employees' Health Insurance Plan (Group 13000) as their primary insurance plan are eligible for a wellness premium discount. Each wellness plan year is November 1 through October 31.

SEIB and Local Government employees along with SEIB retirees are able to use the State Wellness Center Pharmacy. The pharmacy offers various over the counter products at discounted prices and a **free medication delivery service**. Delivery can be provided to the patients located in Montgomery. Please designate which site you would like your medication delivered to, and if it is to your residence someone must be available at the home to receive the delivery.

## State Wellness Center Healthcare Clinic

The SEIB clinic has a quality healthcare **TEAM** that includes nurse practitioners, an ambulatory care pharmacist, a physician, and nurses who work closely together to take care of your health and wellness needs.

### Services Include:

- Treat minor illnesses
- Provide health education & monitoring
- Check health progress between appointments
- Share information with your physician
- Monitor efficacy & safety of every medication
- Evaluate out of pocket medication expense
- Smoking cessation & weight loss services
- Diabetes education program
- Immunizations & injectable medications
- Develop a personalized medication plan
- Monitor control of chronic illnesses
- Medication check-ups
- Medication therapy management