

You FIRST

Your Month of Well-being

February 2023

American Heart Month

It's that time of year again! Time to break out your red shirts and show your support, as well as raise awareness for the number one leading cause of death in the United States, heart disease. What exactly is heart disease? This term refers to several types of heart conditions such as [coronary artery disease](#) (CAD), which affects the blood flow to the heart. This is the most common form of heart disease, and for many, the first sign is a [heart attack](#).

Heart Disease Risk Factors

- **High blood pressure** is a major risk factor for heart disease. Many times, referred to as the "silent killer," high blood pressure usually shows no symptoms, which is why it is important to get your [blood pressure measured](#) regularly.
- **High blood cholesterol** is another risk factor of heart disease. Approximately 2 in 5 adults in the United States have high cholesterol (total blood cholesterol \geq 200 mg/dL).
- Did you know **those who smoke** are 2 to 4 times more likely to get heart disease than nonsmokers? This is because [smoking](#) causes an instant rise in blood pressure, heart rate, and reduces blood flow to the heart.
- Additional risk factors include diabetes, being overweight/obese, poor diet, being physically inactive, and excessive alcohol use.

Heart Healthy Lifestyle Tips

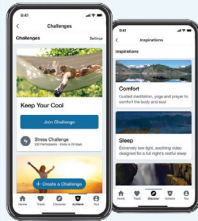
- The first step to heart health is knowing your risk. Click [here](#) to learn more!
- Choosing [heart healthy foods](#) such as fruits and vegetables and limiting saturated fats and added sugars will help reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Aim for a [healthy weight](#). Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider about your BMI (Body Mass Index) and what it means for you.
- [Move more](#). Being physically active is one of the best ways to keep your heart and lungs healthy. You may even consider asking a colleague to walk with you on a regular basis at work! Keep both of you accountable by setting reminders to move during the day.
- **Manage Stress**. Reducing stress helps your heart health. Talk to a qualified mental health provider or someone else you trust.

Sources: [FastStats - Leading Causes of Death \(cdc.gov\)](#); [Cholesterol | cdc.gov](#); [Smoking and Cardiovascular Disease | Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)

Heart Health: National Resources

- Find delicious recipes from the American Heart Association [here!](#)
- Free smoking cessation support is available! Call 800-QUIT-NOW or visit [How to Quit | Smoking & Tobacco Use | CDC](#) for more information.
- Check out the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's [Healthy Blood Pressure for Healthy Hearts: Tracking Your Numbers worksheet](#).
- An easy and effective tool you can use when grocery shopping to ensure you are picking out heart smart foods is the [American Heart Association Heart-Check](#). When you see this mark on products, you can be confident that the item meets the AHA guidelines for healthy eating.

Don't Forget to Download the NEW CareFirst WellBeing App!



To start exploring the CareFirst WellBeing program, visit carefirst.com/wellbeing to download the CareFirst WellBeing app and register for your account. If you have previously registered with Sharecare, you can download the app and log in with your current username and password.

CareFirst Member Resources

One-on-One Health Coaching: Coaches are registered nurses and trained professionals who provide one-on-one support to help you reach your wellness goals.

Craving to Quit: Quitting tobacco can lower your risk for many health conditions including heart disease. Our program's expert guidance, support and online tools make quitting easier than you might think.

Inspirations: Soothing video content in the palm of your hand designed to help reduce and eliminate daily stress.

Weight Management Program: Improve your overall health, reach a healthier weight and reduce your risk for pre-diabetes and associated chronic diseases.

Wear Red Day!

National Wear Red Day is celebrated every year on the first Friday of February to raise awareness for the leading cause of death in the United States. On **February 3, 2023**, be sure to rock the red to show your support!

For more wear red day inspiration, visit the *National Heart Lung and Blood Institute's Wear Red Day page*, or the *AHA's go red for women page*. You can also visit [#OurHearts](#) to find out how your friends, family and coworkers can support each other to be heart healthy.