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ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HEART DISEASE

Cardiovascular disease is an umbrella term used to describe diseases associated with a variety of heart conditions, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diseases of the arteries. A narrowing of the arteries that supply blood and oxygen to the heart causes coronary heart disease. Coronary heart disease includes *myocardial infarction*, commonly referred to as a heart attack, and *angina pectoris*, the clinical term for chest pain. When a person has a heart attack, there is a blockage of a coronary artery, usually caused by a blood clot. Chest pain occurs when the heart does not receive enough oxygen.

A **stroke** occurs when the blood vessels, carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain, become clogged or rupture. When this happens, the brain is deprived of the blood flow it needs. Without the blood flow, cells will die, and the part of the body controlled by these cells cannot function either.

More than 960,000 Americans die of CVD each year, accounting for more than 40 percent of all deaths. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for American women aged 35 and older and the leading cause of death in Kentucky. In fact, CVD will kill more people in Kentucky this year than all forms of cancer, pneumonia, influenza, and traffic accidents combined. Understanding, reducing, and controlling the risk factors for cardiovascular disease can reduce deaths and save lives.

Continued on the back 



TEST YOUR HEART HEALTH KNOWLEDGE!

TRUE or FALSE

1. One in five women will eventually die because of heart disease or stroke.
2. Heart disease is the leading killer of women in Kentucky.
3. More men than women have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.
4. African-American women have a higher death rate from heart disease than Caucasian women.

(Answers located on back)

More than 960,000 Americans die of cardiovascular disease each year.

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Healthy Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations

Risk factors can be controlled. Risk factors include:

- Obesity
- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes
- High Blood Cholesterol

Lifestyle recommendations will help reduce your risk for developing cardiovascular disease include:

- **Don't Smoke:** Cigarette smokers are two to three times more likely to die from coronary heart disease than non-smokers. The chances of dying early will decrease dramatically if you do not smoke. If you do smoke and quit, the benefits to your health will be immediate. Besides feeling physically better, within a few years of quitting, the risk of stroke and coronary artery disease will become similar to that of non-smokers.
- **Eat a variety of nutritious foods from all the food groups:** Vegetables and fruits are high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber — and are low in calories. Whole-grain foods help lower blood cholesterol level and create a feeling of fullness. Eat fish, such as salmon or herring, at least twice a week to increase intake of omega-3 fatty acids.
- **Limit the amount of nutrient-poor foods you eat:** Limits foods and beverages high in calories but low in nutrients. Limit your intake of foods high in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, and sodium.
- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Obesity is now recognized as a major risk factor for developing heart disease, which can lead to a heart attack. People who are overweight or obese are more likely to have heart disease. High blood pressure is more common among those who are obese. Obesity is also associated with higher levels of triglycerides (blood fat) and lower levels of HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol).
- **Become more physically active:** Most Americans don't do enough physical activity to benefit their health. Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease. All forms of physical activity — walking, swimming, cycling, jogging, skiing, aerobic dancing — will benefit your heart tremendously.

Chronic fatigue and shortness of breath are a major indicator of heart disease in men and women, but more often ignored in women



KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK! DIAL 9-1-1

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, or squeezing pain in center of chest, lasting more than a few minutes. Pain may go away and come back.
- Pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck, and arms.
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, nausea, or shortness of breath.

HEART HEALTH QUIZ ANSWERS

1. **FALSE** – One in **TWO** women will eventually die because of heart disease or stroke.
2. **TRUE** – Women accounted for **52.1%** of all cardiovascular deaths for the period of 1995 to 1997.
3. **FALSE** – More women have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. Women are also more apt to lead a sedentary lifestyle.
4. **TRUE** – Obesity, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol are all modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

SOURCES:

- "Preventing Heart Disease and Stroke: The Nation's Leading Killers – At a Glance 2003." 2003. Centers for Disease Control.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3031884>
- <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3040449>
- <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3038016>
- Adapted from the February 2004 HEEL Health Bulletin

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