

Community Health Coalition, Inc.

407 Crutchfield Street

P.O. Box 15176

Durham, NC 27704

Phone: (919) 470 - 8680

Fax: (919) 470 - 8688

Email: Healthcoali@aol.com

Website: www.chealthc.org



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Health Sunday Topic: *Heart Health Awareness*



Kevin L. Thomas, MD

Kevin L. Thomas, MD, F.A.C.C., Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease at Duke University Medical Center states, **“The key to a healthy heart is prevention and remember you are the most important person in taking care of your health.... In 2012 take control of your health; be informed, see a doctor, take your medications correctly, exercise, eat better and eat less, and stop smoking (if it applies to you). Be Blessed!”**

Heart Disease is the number one cause of death in the US killing more than 817,000 people annually. Over 2200 Americans die daily from heart disease. African Americans are disproportionately affected by heart disease and at a much earlier age. **According to the State of Durham County’s Health Report for 2010, the top two leading causes of death in Durham County are cancer and diseases of the heart.**

The American Heart Association has identified several *risk factors* that increase the risk of heart disease. Some of them can be treated or controlled, and some can’t. The more risk factors you have, the greater your chance of developing heart disease.

Major risk factors that can't be changed:

- **Increasing Age**
- **Male/Female – Sex (Gender)**
- **Race/Ethnicity**

It is extremely important to focus on the risk factors that you can change to reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

The key is prevention!

Major risk factors you treat, or control by changing your lifestyle or taking medicine:

- **Tobacco Smoke** - Stop today! It's not too late!
- **High Blood Cholesterol**- Goal is LDL (bad) cholesterol to be less than 100.
- **High Blood Pressure** "Silent Killer"-Goal is to keep blood pressure less than 140/90 or less than 130/80 if you have diabetes.
- **Physical Inactivity**- Goal is to exercise 5 days a week for 30 minutes or more. Exercise with a friend or spouse. The mall is a great place to walk. Take advantage!!! Use the steps instead of the elevator and park far away instead of waiting for that close parking space.
- **Overweight** - The United States has the highest rate of obesity in the world.
- **Diabetes Mellitus** - Goal is to keep A1C less than 7.

Remember your ABC's: Avoid Tobacco; Be More Active; Choose Good Nutrition.

***If you don't know your numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol, A1C & weight)
Ask Your Provider!***

If you don't have insurance or can't afford to see a doctor there are safety net clinics in Durham, NC including CAARE Inc. at 214 Broadway Street Durham, NC; (919) 683-5300

For More Information:



www.americanheart.org

www.checkitchangeit.org

www.startwithyourheart.com

1-888-MY-HEART (1-888-694-

3278)

A message from your Community Health Coalition in partnership with North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., and Durham Regional Hospital.

REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!