

## Community Health Coalition, Inc.

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Healthy People  
2020

Improving the health of Durham  
& NC communities since 1989

# 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 diseases at Duke University states *"The key to a healthy heart is prevention and remember you are the most important person in taking care of your health.... So take responsibility for your health, be informed, take your medications correctly, exercise, eat better and eat less, and stop smoking (if it applies to you). God Bless!"*

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for both men and women in the United States, claiming approximately 1 million lives annually. In the State of North Carolina diseases of the heart is the number one cause of death. In Durham County, cancer is the leading cause of death, but followed by diseases of the heart. African Americans are disproportionately affected and data indicates that African Americans are affected earlier, get sicker, and die quicker due to heart diseases. (Source: 2011 Durham County Community Health Assessment)

## RISK FACTORS FOR HEART DISEASE

- **Age:** Heart disease can occur at any age. However, four out of five people who die from coronary heart disease are aged 65 or older. The risk of stroke doubles with each decade after the age of 55.
- **Gender:** Women tend to get coronary artery disease an average of 10 years later than men.
- **Family history:** Presence of heart disease in a parent or sibling increases your risk of developing heart disease.
- **Smoking:** Smokers are twice as likely to suffer heart attacks as non-smokers
- **Cholesterol:** The higher the blood cholesterol level, the higher the risk of coronary heart disease
- **High blood pressure:** High blood pressure (over 140/90 mmHg and over 130/80 mmHg in diabetics) increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, aneurysm, and kidney damage.
- **Physical inactivity:** Failure to exercise can contribute to an increased risk of coronary heart disease.
- **Obesity:** People who are overweight are more likely to develop heart disease because excess weight causes extra strain on the heart
- **Alcohol:** Drinking more than one drink a day increases your chances of developing heart disease
- **Diabetes:** Diabetes seriously increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, even if glucose levels are under control. More than 80% of diabetes sufferers die of some form of heart or blood vessel disease.

## **REDUCE YOUR RISK BY CHOOSING A HEART HEALTHY LIFESTYLE**



- Engage in regular or moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes five days a week
- Adopt a diet low in salt, saturated and trans fats and high in unsaturated fats (fish, avocado, etc.).
- Maintain a normal body weight
- Avoid smoking and recreational drug use.
- Maintain your blood pressure below 140/90
- Keep your bad cholesterol (LDL) level below 100
- Quit Smoking
- Take your medications as prescribed

**Prevention is the key to reducing your risk of developing heart disease. You should focus on the risk factors that you can change**

**Remember your ABC's: Adopt a heart healthy lifestyle; Be more active; Check your numbers**



**If you don't have health 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, CONTACT:**

**[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)**

**[www.checkitchangeit.org](http://www.checkitchangeit.org)**

**[www.startwithyourheart.com](http://www.startwithyourheart.com)**

**1-888-MY-HEART (1-888-694-3278)**

**REMEMBER: A healthier community starts with you. Make copies of this newsletter and share with your congregation, colleagues, family, and friends. You never know whose life you might be saving.**

**This message is 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.**