



**Date: February 24, 2014**

## **Healthy Sunday Topic: Heart Health Awareness**

Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States. For the African-American community, heart disease takes an even greater toll, more so than any other racial and ethnic group. The death rate from cardiovascular diseases for Americans has declined by 20 percent in recent years; however the decrease has been much less for African Americans. In addition, African Americans have a 40 percent higher chance of dying from a heart attack than whites. The average life expectancy of African Americans is 4 years less than other racial groups. The main reasons for this are preventable. Efforts to reduce the major risk factors for heart disease would narrow the gap.



Kevin L. Thomas, MD, F.A.C.C., Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease at Duke University Medical Center states, **“Arm yourself with knowledge as this will empower you to take control of your health”**

### **Risk factors that we can target to reduce heart disease include:**

- *High blood pressure*
- *High cholesterol*
- *Diabetes*
- *Tobacco use*
- *Obesity*
- *Physical inactivity*
- *Stress*

### **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)

### **Change your lifestyle**

- Exercise for 30 minutes a day at least 5 days a week
- Eat fast food no more than twice a month. Order salads.
- Eat out less than twice per month
- Count calories (<2200 per day)
- Limit sodium (salt) intake (< 4grams per day) Less if you have heart disease or high BP

### **Be Prepared. Ask your doctor questions about your health**

- What tests should I have, and how often, to monitor my risk factors for developing heart disease and stroke?
- What do my test results mean? Do I have heart disease?
- What sort of treatment plan do you recommend? Can you help me plan a safe exercise program?
- What are the possible side effects of medications I've been prescribed?

## Message from American Heart Association

5 ways to have a  
heart healthy 2014



### 1. Drink More Water

You've heard it time and again, but the fact remains: Drinking the right amount of water is a key ingredient in staying healthy. If you're drinking more water, you'll have less room for sugary sodas – which is a good thing. Many people forget the cheapest drink is readily available in our houses – water!

### 2. Go Green

By keeping your cabinets stocked with heart healthy fruits and vegetables you are in better shape to stick to your resolution. And if fresh doesn't work with your schedule or habits, remember you can get frozen or canned.

### 3. Eat Seasonally

Good for your budget and waistline, eating seasonally means you are getting food at its peak performance and flavor level. Additionally, you'll be supporting your local community and farmers, which is always a great resolution as well.

### 4. Cut out Processed Food

Just do it. Decide that 2014 is going to be the year you say no to aspartame, high fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated oil. In addition to chemicals your body doesn't need or want, processed foods are full of added salt. Higher salt intake puts you at risk for high blood pressure. In fact, 75 percent of the salt in the average American diet comes from salt added to processed food and restaurant food, according to the American Heart Association. So take control and cut out salt wherever you can.

### 5. Eat More Fiber

Crucial to heart health and reducing the risk of heart disease, fiber is easy to add to your diet. Whole grains are filled with fiber, which makes digestion easier and helps you feel fuller when you're done eating – both key factors in weight management.

### REMEMBER

**A**rm yourself with knowledge on heart health. **B**e more active.

**C**hoose good nutrition.

### Something to Consider:

**February 14<sup>th</sup> is National Donor Day!** Give your heart for Life.

Consider becoming an organ donor.

Call Community Health Coalition at 919-470-8680 or Visit  
website at [www.chealthc.org](http://www.chealthc.org)



**Health Tip is a message from Community Health Coalition, Inc.** and is written in partnership with Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, and Duke Regional Hospital.

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