



Health Beat



Health news and facts compiled by the Meriden Public Library

March 2020

Heart Attack, Stroke Are Main Cause of Death in U.S.

Having a heart attack or stroke can be a life-changing event for a person and their loved ones.

Both are preventable, yet they remain the leading cause of death, disability and healthcare spending in the United States.

Here are some of the ways you can lower your risk of heart disease and having a heart attack or stroke:

- ♥ Eat a healthy diet
- ♥ Manage any medical condition
- ♥ Avoid smoking
- ♥ Limit alcohol use
- ♥ Be physically active
- ♥ Know your family history

For more information on heart disease and how you can improve and maintain your health please visit <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics>

—Meriden Health Department

You're Not Too Young To Worry About Heart Disease

How much do you really know about your heart's health? Do you know that heart disease can affect people of any age, even those who eat right?

Cardiovascular disease kills more Americans each year than any other disease. Let's set the record straight.

"I'm too young to worry about heart disease." As early as childhood and adolescence, plaque can start accumulating in the arteries and lead to clogged arteries. One in three Americans has cardiovascular disease, but not all are senior citizens. Even young and middle-aged people can develop heart problems – especially now that obesity, type 2 diabetes and other risk factors are becoming more common at a younger age.

"I'd know if I had high blood pressure because there would be warning signs."

High blood pressure is called the "silent killer" because you don't usually know you have it. Treatment of high blood pressure is critical; if left untreated, it can cause heart attack, stroke,

"I'll know when I'm having a heart attack because I'll have chest pain." Not neces-

sarily. Although it's common to have chest pain or discomfort, a heart attack may cause subtle symptoms. These include shortness of breath, nausea, feeling



lightheaded, and pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the jaw, neck or back.

"Diabetes won't threaten my heart as long as I take my medication." Treating diabetes can help reduce your risk for or delay the development of cardiovascular diseases. But even when blood sugar levels are under control, you're still at increased risk.

"I don't need to have my cholesterol checked until I'm middle-aged." The American Heart Association recommends you start getting your cholesterol checked every 5 years starting at age 20.

"My heart is beating really fast. I must be having a heart attack." Some variation in your heart rate is normal.

—American Heart Association

Physical Activity Can Lower Risk For Heart Disease

When done regularly, moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity can lower your risk for chronic heart disease.

This is a condition in which a waxy substance called plaque builds up inside your coronary arteries. These arteries supply your heart muscle with oxygen-rich blood.

Plaque narrows the arteries and reduces blood flow to your heart. Eventually, an area of plaque can rupture. This causes a blood clot to form on the surface of the plaque.

If the clot becomes large enough, it can mostly or completely block blood flow through a coronary artery. Blocked blood flow to the heart causes a heart attack.

Certain traits, conditions, or habits may raise your risk for

heart disease. Physical activity can help control some of these risk factors because it:

- ♥ Can lower blood pressure



and triglyceride. Triglycerides are a type of fat in the blood.

- ♥ Can raise HDL cholesterol levels. HDL sometimes is called “good” cholesterol.

- ♥ Helps your body manage blood sugar and insulin levels, which lowers your risk for type 2 diabetes.

- ♥ Reduces levels of C-

reactive protein in your body. High levels of C-reactive protein may suggest an increased risk for heart disease.

- ♥ Helps reduce overweight and obesity when combined with a reduced-calorie diet.

- ♥ May help you quit smoking. Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease.

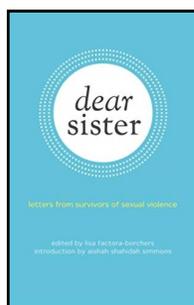
Inactive people are more likely to develop chronic heart disease than people who are physically active.

Studies suggest that inactivity is a major risk factor for chronic heart disease, just like high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and smoking.

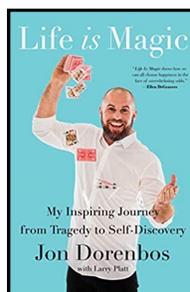
—National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

New Books at the Meriden Public Library

These health-related books can be found in the “New Books” area:



Dear Sister: Letters From Survivors of Sexual Violence
edited by Lisa Factora-Borchers, 362.8 DE



Life Is Magic: My Inspiring Journey From Tragedy to Self-Discovery
by Jon Dorenbos, BIO Dorenbos