



Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Most middle-aged and young adults have one or more risk factors for heart disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or being a smoker or overweight. Having multiple risk factors increases your risk of heart disease. The good news is that there’s a lot we can do to prevent it.

Heart-healthy living involves understanding your risk, making healthy choices, and taking steps to reduce your chances of getting heart disease. By taking preventive measures, you can lower your risk of developing heart disease that could lead to a heart attack.

Continue reading on the next page for actions you can take to reduce your risk for heart disease.

#OurHearts

February is American Heart Month

Love your heart. Learn more about keeping it healthy.

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American Heart Month Cont.

When we talk about heart health, we're talking about how healthy your heart muscle is - and how well your veins and arteries can carry blood to and from your heart to other important organs. It's your heart and your circulation. It works hard getting your body all the blood and oxygen it needs. And when your heart is stressed, it affects your whole body.

If you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, those blood vessels can become stiff or blocked. And that can slow, or even stop, blood flow. A heart attack happens when blood flow to the heart is blocked. A stroke happens when blood flow to the brain is blocked. The blockages that lead to heart attack or stroke can happen suddenly or over time. The good news? These are things you can do today to lower your risk.

Your heart health journey starts with you! It doesn't have to be a big change - small steps, like getting active and eating more fruits and vegetables will get you where you want to go.

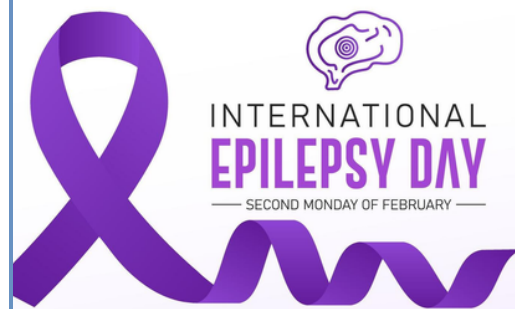
- Take a first step - any first step!
- Work it into your daily routine
- Tell a friend
- Track your progress
- Stay motivated



Physical activity gets your heart pumping to keep it strong and healthy for a lifetime. It sounds like a lot of work, but it doesn't have to be. Anytime you're moving your body, you're protecting your heart. And it's never too late to get started!

Healthy eating is key to a healthy heart. You don't need to follow a fad diet or change your whole eating routine overnight. You can start with small changes.

Doctors and other medical professionals are here to keep you healthy. Find a doctor you like and trust, and start working together to get your heart health on track.



- Epilepsy is a chronic disease of the brain that affects people of all ages.
- Around 50 million people worldwide have epilepsy, making it the most common neurological diseases internationally.
- In NYS, about 215,000 people are living with active epilepsy.
- More than half the time, the cause of epilepsy is unknown.
- In some cases, it may be due to head injury, infections or a tumor in the brain, a stroke, degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, substance abuse or hereditary.
- Drug Therapy is the most common form of treatment, followed by surgery.



While some factors - like genetics - are beyond our control, nearly 40% of cancer cases and 44% of cancer-related deaths are linked to preventable lifestyle choices. By making informed decisions about what we eat, drink, and expose ourselves to, we can significantly lower our cancer risk.



Smoke is the leading culprit:

This one is a no-brainer. We all know about the harmful effects of smoking and consuming tobacco products, with the adverse health effects ranging from asthma and COPD to lung cancer. Smoking remains the #1 most significant preventable cause of cancer. Smoking doesn't just increase the risk of lung cancer, it is also linked to nearly 20 different cancers including esophageal, colorectal, liver, pancreatic, and ovarian cancer. Secondhand smoke exposure can also lead to poor health outcomes, including cancer. Quitting smoking is not only important for the smoker, but also their family!

Quitting smoking at any age significantly reduces cancer risk. It's not about how many years you've already smoked; it's about how many future years of nonsmoking can you give yourself. New York State has free tools to quit smoking, vaping, and other tobacco products. Visit nysmokefree.com for resources

Alcohol is a hidden danger:

Alcohol, in any amount, is detrimental to our health. Alcohol consumption contributes to about 5% of cancer cases. It increases the risk of cancers in the oral cavity, pharynx, esophagus, colorectum, liver, larynx, and breast. It is recommended to either stay away from alcohol, or have no more than two drinks per day for men and no more than one drink per day for women.

Diet - you are what you eat:

Our dietary habits can make a real difference towards our cancer risk. Consumption of red meat (beef, pork, veal, lamb, etc.) and processed meats (smoked and cured meats, cold cuts, sausages, etc.) have been shown to increase a person's risk for colorectal cancer. In addition, excess body weight is also a significant and preventable risk factor for cancer. It's important to aim for a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Maintain a healthy weight through proper nutrition and regular physical activity.

Protect your skin from ultra violet exposure:

Ultra Violet (UV) radiation from the sun and tanning beds contributes to almost 5% of cancer cases. In fact, it's the primary cause of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. It's recommended to use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher, avoid tanning beds, and seek shade during peak sunlight hours to help reduce your exposure to UV. Also - don't forget those sunglasses!

Infections: an often overlooked factor:

Infections caused by viruses and certain bacteria play a significant role in cancer development. They can lead to cancer through mechanisms like chronic inflammation, immune suppression, and genetic alterations in cells. Human papilloma virus (HPV) infection is the main cause of cervical cancer and can be prevented through vaccination. Hepatitis B and C are linked to liver cancer, and can also be prevented by vaccine.

World Cancer Day

is an international day observed every February 4th to raise awareness about cancer, encourage its prevention and mobilize action to address the global cancer epidemic.

The World Cancer Day Theme 2025-2027 "UNITED BY UNIQUE" places people at the center of care and their stories at the heart of the conversation. Cancer is more than just a medical diagnosis - it's a deeply personal matter. Behind every diagnosis lies a unique human story filled with grief, pain, healing, resilience, love and more.

Cancer is one of the most common chronic diseases in NYS and is second only to heart disease as the leading cause of death.



HOW CAN YOU SPREAD THE WORD THIS WORLD CANCER DAY 2026?

Children's Dental Health Month

Every day should be about children's dental health. The American Dental Association offers free materials to celebrate and promote children's dental health, not only during the month of February, but all year long.

Cavities are the most common chronic disease of childhood in the United States. More than half of children aged 6 to 8 years have had a cavity in at least one of their baby teeth. More than half of adolescents aged 12 to 19 years have had a cavity in at least one of their permanent teeth.

The good news is that cavities are preventable. Fluoride varnish can prevent one third of cavities in baby teeth. Dental sealants can also prevent cavities for many years.

Parents - you can start taking care of your children's teeth as babies. Wipe their gums twice a day with a soft, clean cloth. When teeth come in, start brushing twice a day with a soft, small-bristled toothbrush and water. Visit the dentist by their first birthday to spot signs of problems early.

Children should brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Help your child brush their teeth until they have good brushing skills.

Teen Dating Violence Month

Teen dating violence affects about 10% of all teenagers between the age of 12 to 18. It includes stalking, harassment, physical or sexual abuse. Teen DV has both serious short-term and long-term consequences. Dating violence victims are likely to experience suicidal thoughts, antisocial behaviors, depression and anxiety, and engage in unhealthy behaviors such as alcohol and drug use.

Unfortunately, many cases go unreported because victims are afraid to tell their family and friends. If you or someone you know are experiencing dating abuse, please get help immediately.

DYK- 1.5 million teenagers in the U.S. say they experienced abusive behavior in a dating relationship?!

Abusive behavior can present as gaslighting, name-calling, excessive texting or monitoring, coercion, unwanted physical contact, and more.



Office for the
Prevention of
Domestic Violence

#TDVAM25

International Condom Day!

It's time to re-engage, re-invigorate, and re-educate about condoms - not just as a barrier but as a cost-effective tool for safer, healthier, and more confident sexual experiences. Condoms are one of many great prevention choices available for ensuring safety, positivity, and well-being in sexual health.

Condoms:
A Smart, Safe, and
Cost-Effective Choice!



Condoms come in different sizes, colors, textures, and thicknesses.

Talk with your partner and choose condoms that feel right for both of you.



Condoms protect
against unplanned pregnancy
and most sexually transmitted
infections, including HIV,
gonorrhoea and chlamydia.



Always use water- or silicone-based lubricant with a condom during vaginal and particularly anal sex.



Eating Disorder Awareness Week

Eating disorders affect 30 million Americans in their lifetime. They impact EVERY BODY, across all backgrounds and communities. Eating disorders have devastating mental and physical consequences but are too often overlooked due to a lack of understanding, myths about who can experience them, and a lack of accessible, quality, culturally responsive resources.

If not treated effectively, eating disorders can become long-term problems and in some cases can even lead to death. The most common eating disorders are anorexia, bulimia, and binge-eating disorder. These disorders can harm the heart, digestive system, bones, teeth, and mouth. They can lead to other diseases. They're also linked with depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. If you or a loved one are struggling, text or call 988 for help.

Signs and symptoms could include:



Mood swings.



Fatigue, fainting or dizziness.



Thinning hair or hair loss.



Unexplained weight changes.



Unusual sweating or hot flashes.

Behavioral symptoms may include:



Eating a lot in a short amount of time.



Compulsive exercising after meals.



Throwing food away.



Withdrawing from friends or social activities.



Forced vomiting after meals or laxative misuse.

Love Yourself this February Self-care Tips

It's February and the month of love! We often forget to put ourselves and our health first, so this month focus on making self-care a priority!

Make a list of things you love about yourself

Celebrate your wins, big and small

Treat yourself to your favorite activity

Learn a new skill

Try to eat a fruit or vegetable with every meal

Get a full 8 hours of sleep

Exercise for at least 30 minutes a day

Stretch in the morning and when you need a break

Pause and take 5 deep breaths

Spend time outdoors

Spend time with loved ones

Try journaling or a new hobby

Practice affirmations

Invest in your appearance

Take a break!



Finding the right treatment depends on the disorder and its symptoms. It usually includes a mix of specific types of talk therapy, medical monitoring, and sometimes nutrition education or medicines.

Where to start?

Whether you start by seeing your primary healthcare provider or a mental health professional, you'll likely benefit from a team of professionals who specialize in eating disorder treatment. This could include a mental health professional, a registered dietitian, medical specialists, and your loved ones.

Create a treatment plan that works for you. It should include evidence-based treatment to address your eating disorder and what your goals are. It also makes it clear what to do if you can't stay with your plan. You'll need to treat physical complications and your mental health.