

February: Heart Health Month

Every year, more than 600,000 American people die from heart disease. Heart disease is the number one cause of death affecting people from all ages, genders, and ethnicities. While everyone knows that eating a poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking and drinking alcohol excessively can lead to heart disease, there are some unknown things that can lead to heart disease.

Surprising Things That Can Lead to Heart Disease:

- **Cars, Planes & Trains.** Scientists discovered that at about 50 decibels—between the volume of a refrigerator humming and a chat between coworkers—traffic noise can raise your blood pressure and the likelihood of heart failure. For each 10 decibel increase, the odds of heart disease and stroke go up even more. Scientists believe the increase is related to how your body reacts to stress.
- **Migraines.** When someone experiences a migraine—especially with auras—they are more likely to suffer a stroke, chest pain, and heart attack.
- **Being Short.** For every 2.5 inches less than the average height, the chances of heart disease goes up about 8%. Shorter people tend to have higher cholesterol and triglyceride levels. It's possible that the way the body controls height and "bad" LDL cholesterol and triglycerides somehow overlap.
- **Loneliness.** Having few friends or being unhappy in your relationship can raise the odds of stroke and heart disease as much as second-hand smoke. Additionally, feeling alone has been linked to high blood pressure and other effects of stress.
- **ADHD Medication.** Because ADHD medications such as dextroamphetamine and methylphenidate can raise your heart rate and blood pressure, it's important to work with your physician to determine if the benefits outweigh the possible risks.
- **Long Hours at Work.** People that work at least 55 hours a week are more likely to suffer from heart disease than those that work 35-40 hours per week. The increased risk could be because of more stress and more sitting.
- **Gum Disease.** Bacteria from your mouth, including periodontal disease, can get into your blood and set off inflammation in the lining of your arteries which can lead to atherosclerosis (a fatty build up in the arteries).
- **A Troubled Childhood.** Experiencing violence, bullying, and abuse during childhood—including seeing harm done to others—has been linked to high blood pressure, obesity, and Type 2 diabetes in adults that can lead to an increased chance of heart disease.



- **Getting Sick with the Flu.** A 2018 study found that people were six times more likely to suffer a heart attack in the week after being diagnosed with the flu than in the year before or after having the flu.
- **A Short Fuse.** Someone who has become recently enraged is five times more likely to have a heart attack. Additionally, 2 hours after an outburst of rage, the chances of a stroke or experiencing a racing heart increases too.

How to Make a Positive Change and Observe Heart Health Month

- **Start a New Heart Healthy Habit.** Start a new heart healthy habit such as going for a 30 minute walk each day or substituting soda with water.
- **Educate Yourself.** Educate yourself about any family heart history and illness. Learn ways to prevent any risk factors for heart disease and lifestyle choices that can help you stay healthy.
- **Get Your Cholesterol Tested.** Discuss with your physician if it is time to have your fasting cholesterol levels tested.
- **Take Time to Read.** Did you know that reading just 6 minutes a day can reduce stress by 68%. That is amazing!

Signs of a Heart Attack

- **Chest Discomfort.** Discomfort in the center of your chest that lasts more than a few minutes—or it may go away and then return. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in Other Areas of the Upper Body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of Breath.** Shortness of breath can occur with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other Signs.** Other possible signs include: cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.
- **Signs for Women.** Women may experience a heart attack without pressure but may experience shortness of breath, pressure or pain in the lower chest or upper abdomen, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting, upper back pressure or extreme fatigue.

**** Immediately call 911 if you are experiencing a heart attack. Fast action saves lives. ****

<https://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/ss/slideshow-heart-disease-surprising-causes>

<https://nationaltoday.com/american-heart-month/>

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-attack/warning-signs-of-a-heart-attack>

<https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;>

