



NMCPHC QUICK HITS

February is all About Hearts ♥

February is the time of year when cupid shows up and you suddenly start seeing hearts everywhere. Red hearts, pink hearts even black hearts for those that are anti-Valentine's Day. While it's fun to celebrate this holiday that is all about love and hearts, the heart you should be focusing on is the one inside our body. February, which is also [American Heart Month](#), is the perfect time to check in on your heart health. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. In the United States, someone has a heart attack every 40 seconds. Let's associate hearts with something other than Valentine's Day this month. Let's associate them with our health and how we can live longer with healthy ones.

What is heart disease?

[Heart disease](#) refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type is [coronary artery disease \(CAD\)](#), which can cause a heart attack. It occurs when a substance called plaque builds up in your arteries. When this happens, your arteries can narrow over time, reducing blood flow to the heart. When your heart muscle doesn't get enough blood, you may have chest pain or discomfort. Over time, CAD can weaken the heart muscle which may lead to heart failure.

Are you at risk?

Risk factors of heart disease include the following:

- [High blood pressure](#)
- [High cholesterol](#)
- Smoking

Other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can also put people at higher risk:

- Having [diabetes](#)
- Being overweight
- Consuming an unhealthy diet
- Not getting enough physical activity
- Excessive alcohol use

How you can reduce your risk of heart disease

- [Quit smoking](#)
- Maintain a [healthy weight](#) (tip: get at least 7-8 hours of sleep each night!)
- Exercise regularly (tips: walk at least 20 minutes a day, choose the stairs over the elevator and park further from the store.)
- Eat a [healthy diet](#) (tips: add a serving of acorn squash to your meal, it has nearly 10% of your daily value of fiber! Find ways to make heart healthy [recipes](#).)
- Talk with your doctor about other ways you can reduce your risk of heart disease.

Additional Resources

- Want to learn more about heart health? [Click here](#)
- How much do you know about heart disease? Take the Heart Disease Quiz by [clicking here](#).
- If you think that you or someone you know is having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately.



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Jacob Sipple

1 in 4 deaths is caused by heart disease.

