

HARC's GUIDE TO AMERICAN HEART MONTH

WHAT IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH?

American Heart Month is a designated time for Americans to focus on keeping families and communities free from heart disease. The first American Heart Month was established in 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, 9 years after he had a heart attack.¹



HEART DISEASE IN THE U.S.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S.² It accounts for **1 in every 4 deaths**.

Factors that put you at a higher risk for heart disease:²

- Diabetes
- Overweight and obesity
- Unhealthy diet
- Physical inactivity
- Excessive alcohol use
- Tobacco use

Annual deaths from heart disease total more than deaths from ALL cancers.¹

HEART DISEASE IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY

In the Coachella Valley, 6.9% or 23,349 people have been diagnosed with heart disease. Other heart health facts in the Coachella Valley:

12.2%

12.2% of Coachella Valley adults have been diagnosed with diabetes

65.9%

65.9% Coachella Valley adults, have a body mass index (BMI) that places them in an overweight or obese category

19.4%

19.4% of Coachella Valley adults do not participate in any aerobic exercise per week

35.7%

35.7% of Coachella Valley adults have high blood pressure

31.8%

31.8% of Coachella Valley adults have high cholesterol

16.8%

16.8% of adults have not had their cholesterol checked



WAYS TO PREVENT HEART DISEASE³

BE AWARE OF YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

- Monitor blood pressure
- Healthy blood pressure is 120/80⁴



STOP SMOKING

- Smoking damages the function of your heart and the structure and function of your blood vessels⁶
- The chemicals in tobacco smoke harm blood cells⁶



EAT A HEART HEALTHY DIET

- Limit foods that are high in saturated fat and sodium. Examples include:
 - fatty beef, pork, poultry with skin butter, lard, and dairy products made from whole or reduced-fat milk⁷
- Foods that are heart-healthy include: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and fat-free and low-fat dairy⁷



GET QUALITY SLEEP AND REDUCE STRESS

- Adults require 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night⁸
- Reducing stress and getting quality sleep can be achieved by⁸
 - Having a regular bedtime routine
 - Meditation
 - Relaxation therapy



INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Aim to engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity daily⁵
- Stay protected against COVID-19 by exercising in your home or outdoors



FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ORDERS

- Get regular check-ups
- If you are prescribed medication for your blood pressure or cholesterol, follow directions
- Let your provider know of anything that has changed



The American Heart Association has several healthy living tips and information to prevent heart disease.⁹ Additional information on heart health can be found on their website [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)



STAFF TIPS

Our Director of Research and Evaluation, Casey, makes sure to check blood pressure and cholesterol regularly because heart disease runs in her family. She also runs 5 days a week to keep her heart healthy.



Our Research and Evaluation Intern, Regina, reads nutrition labels on foods and tries to stay away from foods that are high in sodium. Many of her relatives have been diagnosed with high blood pressure so she also makes an effort to walk a few miles a day with her dogs.

Our Research Assistant, Amairani, tries to include green vegetables and fruits into her diet with green morning juices. Because high cholesterol and diabetes run in her family, she also engages in physical activities like dance or High Intensity Interval Training, HIIT, workouts from YouTube videos.



Our Chief Executive Officer, Jenna, has been diagnosed with both high cholesterol and high blood pressure, both of which run in her family. She makes sure to always take her medication and keep her prescriptions refilled. Skipping doses can put you at risk for having a heart attack or stroke, so she makes sure her medication adherence is strong!

SOURCES:

1. <https://www.heart.org/en/around-the-aha/february-marks-56th-consecutive-american-heart-month>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm>
3. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/heart-month/help-prevent-heart-disease>
4. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/high-blood-pressure>
5. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/heart-truth/increase-physical-activity>
6. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/smoking-and-your-heart>
7. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/heart-truth/eat-a-heart-healthy-diet>
8. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/heart-truth/get-quality-sleep-and-reduce-stress>
9. <https://www.heart.org/en/affiliates/california/coachella-valley>