

In February, the public health community places a special emphasis on heart health in recognition of American Heart Month. Of particular importance is the impact of heart disease on vulnerable and underserved populations. In the United States, heart disease is the leading cause of death for most ethnicities, including African American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian American, and Pacific Island populations. Locally, in the Maryland suburbs of Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's County, the statistics of heart disease for ethnic minorities is equally alarming. Throughout the tri-county region, African Americans are two or three times more likely to die from heart disease than Latinos and Asian Americans. In Montgomery and Prince George's County, Asian Americans are two times more likely to suffer from an ischemic heart disease than their Latino counterparts.

While access to healthcare services, employment, education, housing conditions, and availability of nutritious food influence these health outcomes, it is possible to reduce the risk of heart disease. During February, take a moment to educate your patients, friends, and family about living heart healthy.

Lowering the risk of heart disease is simple as **A-B-C**

- **A**voiding tobacco
- **B**eing more active (30 minutes of daily exercise)
- **C**hoosing good nutrition (limiting processed foods, increasing servings of fruits and vegetables)

Additionally:

- Reduce stress levels
- Drink 8 glasses of water each day
- Control cholesterol levels
- Control blood pressure levels
- Monitor blood sugar
- Limit alcohol consumption



It is also important to be familiar with the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. **Five major** warning signs are:

- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back
- Feeling weak, light-headed, or faint
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Pain or discomfort in arms or shoulder
- Shortness of breath

Do your part to take care of your heart. Live stronger, live longer.

Partnering Toward a Healthier Future,

Your Friends at
The Center on Health Disparities

