Show Your Heart Some Love

What’s at Stake?

Today, heart disease and stroke take one life every 7 minutes and 90% of Canadians have at least one risk factor. In the United States, heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women.

What’s the Danger?

Heart disease describes a range of conditions that affect your heart. They include blood vessel diseases, such as coronary artery disease; heart rhythm problems (arrhythmias); and heart defects you’re born with, or congenital heart defects. The term “heart disease” is often used interchangeably with the term “cardiovascular disease” which refers to conditions that involve narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can lead to a heart attack, chest pain, or stroke.

How to Protect Yourself

Did you know that 8 in 10 cases of premature heart disease and stroke is preventable through healthy lifestyle choices and behaviors? Here are some examples.

1. Plan to eat well. Set aside time each week to plan your meals. Doing so will make it easier to shop for healthier foods, cook at home and stick to a healthier meal plan. Incorporate more fresh fruits, veggies and lean protein into your diet.

2. Get moving. Set goals for starting or increasing exercise. For example, start off the month by walking 15 minutes, 3 times each week. By mid-month, increase your time to 30 minutes, 3 times each week. Remember to check with your doctor first before starting an exercise routine.

3. Take steps to quit smoking. If you currently smoke, quitting can cut your risk for heart disease and stroke. Learn more at CDC's Smoking and Tobacco Use website .

4. Know your numbers. Know what a healthy weight is for you and maintain it. Have your cholesterol and triglyceride levels checked at least once a year and monitor your blood pressure and work with your doctor to keep these numbers within healthy ranges.

5. Manage stress levels. Long-term stress can lead to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. It can also increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

6. Learn how to perform CPR and how to use Automated external defibrillators (AEDs). In the event of a sudden cardiac arrest, early access to CPR and defibrillation can increase a person's odds of survival.

7. Learn the symptoms of heart attack and stroke. Every minute counts during the onset of a heart attack or stroke—the faster medical treatment is received, the higher the chances for survival and a more complete recovery.

Signs of Heart Attack	Signs of Stroke
ü **Chest discomfort** (pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain, burning or heaviness) ü **Discomfort** in neck, jaw, shoulder, arms, back ü **Shortness of breath** ü **Sweating** ü **Nausea** ü **Light-headedness**	FACE is it drooping? ARMS can you raise them? SPEECH is it slurred or jumbled? TIME to call 9-1-1 right away!

Final Word

Heart disease is often called the silent killer. Don’t let it sneak up on you. Take steps towards a healthier lifestyle and show your heart some love!