



HEART HEALTHY

BY DR. CALEB PATEE



Even with Valentine's Day in the rearview mirror, the whole month is still a time to focus on the heart. February is American Heart Month! So, let's take time to recognize the indicators and variables of cardiovascular issues and a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Diet/Weight

Diet is the cornerstone to a healthy life and a reduction in all sources of disease states. A low animal protein, plant rich diet is the driver for good cardiovascular health, such as the [Mediterranean diet](#) - rich in monounsaturated fats and nutrients from olive oil, nuts, fruit, and whole grains; and limits consumption of animal-based protein, particularly red meat. [Research](#) has shown reduction in rates of cardiovascular disease such as hypertension, heart attack, and strokes.



Not all blood pressure treatments need medication! The first and most [effective treatment](#) option is lifestyle intervention with diet, weight reduction, and cardiovascular exercise. A focus on a [low salt diet](#) to less than 2 grams a day of from all sources has been shown to reduce blood pressure values; this in conjunction with the [DASH diet](#) that is similar to a Mediterranean diet as noted previously.

DID YOU KNOW?

Although African American adults are 40 percent more likely to have high blood pressure, they are less likely than non-Hispanic whites to have their blood pressure under control.

Exercise

Presently, the [AHA recommends](#) 150 or more minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise to maintain heart health. This time can be adjusted based upon intensity and duration of exercise. Furthermore, an individual's fitness level is a better indicator of mortality than well known predictors such as smoking, high blood pressure, an diabetes.



Blood Pressure

Conventional heart prevention is focused on good blood pressure control and limited cholesterol. If blood pressure remains elevated, we know rates of cardiovascular disease are equally elevated.

Smoking/Tobacco Products

Smoking is a [well known risk factor](#) for all disease states. It is known to increase plaque build up in heart arteries, which leads to an increase in heart attack and stroke. Fear not, quitting is the best treatment! Those that stop smoking can see a rapid initial reduction in their overall heart associated risk in the first year. Those that are chronic smokers will take up to 15 years to reach equivalent risks to those that have never smoked.

Increasing data demonstrates adverse outcomes for all forms of tobacco, including cigars, smokeless tobacco, pipes, and electronic cigarettes. Discuss your options with your doctor and check if your insurer has free programs to help you quit.



About Caleb Patee, DO, MPH

Dr. Patee is a family medicine physician who enjoys building relationships while discussing preventative medicine and implementing disease management strategies. He has a special interest in the interchange of healthcare and technology. How technology can be used to reach more patients to help progress preventative medicine and improve overall health of patients.

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