

# HEALTHY HEART NEWS

Montefiore | St. Luke's Cornwall

Volume 18 | February 2020

Beverly Keefer, Director of Cardiovascular Services / Anthony Patrello, Medical Director of MSLC Cardiovascular Institute

Montefiore St. Luke's Cornwall's Cardiovascular Institute is committed to you and our community. We pride ourselves on being an engaged partner with the many constituencies that we serve. As part of our commitment to meeting your heart health needs, we have developed this quarterly newsletter filled with information that can improve the quality of, and in some cases, help save your life. If there are topics that you would like to see covered in future editions, please e-mail Beverly Keefer, Director of Cardiovascular Services, Cardiac Cath and Interventional Radiology at [bkeefer@montefioreslc.org](mailto:bkeefer@montefioreslc.org).

## PREVENTION OF HEART DISEASE STARTS IN CHILDHOOD

### Do you know the facts?

Heart disease impacts us all in some way, and is the number one cause of death for both men and women.

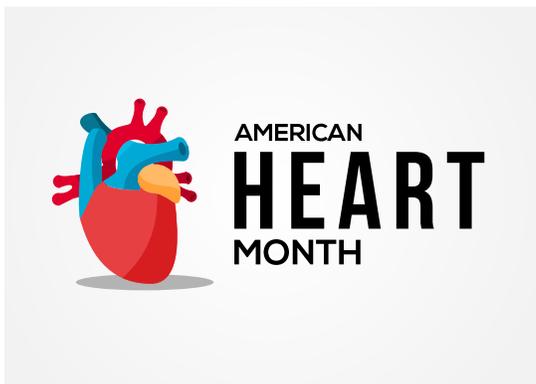
In the United States, 610,000 people die from heart disease every year. That is one death every 80 seconds. Cardiovascular disease kills more women than all cancers, accidents and diabetes combined. According to the statistics concerning heart disease in America, Coronary artery disease affects Hispanic Americans the most with Hispanic women being more likely to develop heart disease 10 years earlier than non-Hispanics.

Worldwide, 47% of cardiac arrest deaths happen outside of the hospital. This statistic also indicates that many people who live with heart disease fail to notice and act on the early warning signs. Many people believe heart disease is a problem for adults and not for your young children. But the CDC says obesity affects one out of every five children in the U.S.. Proper diet and exercise habits starting in childhood can contribute to a lifetime of heart health, or a lifetime of heart damage.

Some of the causes of adult heart disease beginning in childhood that can be prevented include:

- Obesity
- Buildup of fat deposits in the arteries
- Unhealthy changes in cholesterol levels
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Exposure to cigarette smoke
- Lack of physical exercise
- Unhealthy diet

Although it's true that risk of heart disease can be hereditary, a healthy diet can help every child reduce such risk. If heart disease does run in your family, talk with your child's healthcare provider about whether to have his or her cholesterol and blood pressure measured regularly, in addition to monitoring weight.



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## HEALTHY FOOD, HEALTHY HEARTS

A balanced diet is important for children and teens for the prevention of heart disease, but also to encourage healthy growth and development.

### Here are some guidelines for creating a heart-healthy childhood diet:

- Serve your child mostly fruits and vegetables, with whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy.
- Monitor portion sizes. The recommended daily amounts of healthy foods for children are:
  - 2 ounces of lean protein (fish, chicken) every day for children between 2 years and 3 years old, 3 ounces to 4 ounces for children 4 years to 8 years old, and 5 ounces to 6 ounces for children 9 years to 18 years old
  - 2 cups of low-fat dairy for children under 8, and 3 cups for children 9 years to 18 years
  - 1.5 cups of fruit
  - 2.5 cups of vegetables
  - 6 ounces of whole grains
- Limit fast food. If you do eat out, make healthy choices (like a grilled chicken sandwich instead of a bacon cheeseburger) and keep portion sizes reasonable.
- Don't give your children sugary drinks. Instead, serve water and low-fat milk.
- Choose healthier fats: the mono and polyunsaturated fats.
- For added nutrients and fiber, choose whole grains like brown rice instead of refined grains like white rice.
- Don't require children to finish everything on their plate. Allow children to tell you when they feel full and are finished with their meal.

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, HEALTHY HEART

Many daily choices that children and teens make affect their heart disease risk.

Here are some choices you can encourage your children and teens to make that will help protect their hearts:

- Get about 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity most days of the week in childhood. This can be broken up throughout the day into 2 or more periods of activity.
- Keep television, phone or computer screen time to less than 2 hours per day.
- Don't expose your kids to cigarette smoke. Ban smoking in your house and car. Don't take your kids to places where people smoke cigarettes. If you smoke, quitting smoking can help reduce the risk of heart disease for you and your kids.

## BE A ROLE MODEL

Remember that you are the most important role model for your kids. Your children and teens will learn their best heart healthy choices by watching you.

**February is American Heart Month.** As a federally designated event, February is an ideal time to remind Americans to focus on their hearts and encourage them to get their families, friends and communities involved.

It is important to **GO RED** in February to fight against heart disease by raising awareness in Women.

### G – Getting your numbers

Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure and cholesterol

### O – Own your lifestyle

Stop smoking, lose weight, exercise and eat healthy

### R – Realize your Risk

We think it won't happen to us, but heart disease affects us all in some way

### E – Educate your family

Make healthy food choices for you and your family, and teach your kids the importance of staying active

### D – Don't be silent:

Tell every woman you know that heart disease is the number one killer of women