



INTER HEALTH Heart PROFESSIONALS ALLIANCE Monthly Newsletter Healthy

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MANAGING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

Angelica De Jesus, VCU Department of Psychology

High blood pressure is a very common health issue. About 1 out of every 3 US adults has it. It is also one of the most common causes of stroke. It also increases the risk of a heart attack.

Normal blood pressure is less than 120/ 80. Above 140/90 is high blood pressure. Luckily, about half of us with high blood pressure are keeping it under control. Learn more by talking with your doctor. Keep your body balanced by eating low salt food and lots of vegetables and some fruit. Stay active by taking walks with friends 3-4 times per week. Keep your blood pressure in check by taking your medication. If you have a family history of high blood pressure your risk is higher. Get your blood pressure checked regularly.

These are just some ways to take care of high blood pressure and lower risk for serious heart problems. Talking with your doctor can help you find what is right for you! Your heart is amazing. Give your heart a little extra love this year and keep it going strong.

HIV

Marifje Teague, VCU School of Medicine

One can get HIV from sharing a needle with or having unprotected sex with a person with HIV. What most people don't know is **what to do after being infected**. There is currently no cure for HIV. But there are drugs that can help one live a more normal life. They can also help HIV patients live longer.

ADAP stands for AIDS Drug Assistance Program. ADAP is a nationwide program that provides medicine at low or no cost to HIV-positive people. **To apply, call the Medication Eligibility Hotline at 1(855)362-0658.** The staff will help with the application. No job is needed to get medication. **The most important thing is**

to not skip doses. Follow the directions on the label. This keeps the virus numbers low so the body can work normally.

See your local health department today for free HIV testing. Most people who are HIV positive do not know it. Talk to your doctor. He or she will be more than happy to help you protect yourself and your loved ones. If you have HIV, you can start getting treatments to feel better.

Act now, get tested. Get treated if positive to help you live a healthier and longer life. Get treated to help you from spreading the disease to others. Before sex with a new partner you both should be tested. Use condoms to decrease your chances of being infected with HIV. If you are 13–65 years of age you should be tested yearly.

Request testing or visit an HIV testing center.

Fan Free Clinic: (804) 358-6343 x 140

VCU HIV/AIDS Center: (804) 840-8835

VA Health Department: (877) 539-9860

NOT JUST TOUGH LOVE

Lyubov Shlashcheva, School of Pharmacy

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is any kind of physical, sexual, or emotional harm done by a partner or spouse. One out of three women will experience it. One out of ten Virginian sexual assault victims are men.

IPV is linked to some health problems. These include frequent headaches and chronic pain. Some may have difficulty sleeping. These may be due to emotional trauma from abusive relationships. They can cause high levels of stress.

If you do not feel safe please seek help. Talking with someone will help you make the best choice for you. Protect yourself and your loved ones. IPV only gets worse

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over time. Seek confidential help now.

Tell your healthcare provider that you do not feel safe!

Get in touch with local groups.

VCU Empower hotline: 1-(800)838-8238

Richmond YWCA hotline: (804)643-0888

Daily Planet: (804)783-0678

Sacred Heart Center Family Literacy Program:

(804)230-4399

RECOGNIZING AND PREVENTING A HEART ATTACK

Scott Rose, VCU School of Medicine

A heart attack is the blockage of blood flow to your heart that causes precious heart muscle to die. Quickly recognizing the symptoms of a heart attack and getting to a hospital lets doctors restore blood flow to your heart and save heart muscle. Act quickly! Learn to recognize the symptoms. Follow the tips below to keep your heart healthy!

The most common symptom of a heart attack is chest discomfort in the middle of your chest that feels like burning, indigestion, heaviness, or squeezing. It can last for more than a few minutes. Other symptoms of a heart attack can also occur, and may be more common in women: shortness of breath, pain in the arm, back, or jaw, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, or cold sweats.

DIET: Eat more whole grains, fish, fruits and vegetables. Grilled or baked chicken and fish are great options. Veggies can be grilled or baked right along with them! Fresh fruits are quick cheap snacks.

Eat less saturated fats and sugar. Red meat, butter and fried foods are very high in saturated fat. Cut back on soda.

EXERCISE: 30 minutes of walking **every day** can help lower your risk of heart disease. Keep a schedule. Start with simple goals to make exercise part of your daily routine.

SMOKING: One of the best things you can do for your health is to **quit smoking.** Quitting at ANY TIME lowers your risk of cancer and heart disease. When you are ready to quit, talk to your doctor.

REGULAR VISITS TO YOUR DOCTOR: See your doctor at least once a year. There are cheap,

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safe medications that your doctor may be able to prescribe to help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol and keep you out of the hospital! Your doctor can also work with you to meet your health goals, like weight loss. New health care laws are making regular health visits even more affordable.

DIABETES AND YOUR HEART HEALTH!

Jake Adkins, VCU School of Medicine

Diabetes is a condition where your blood contains too much sugar. Some do not realize the bad effect high blood sugar can have on their heart's health. High blood sugar can increase risk for heart attack and stroke. The good news is that keeping your blood sugar at a healthy level can lower the risk for heart attack and stroke.

There are many ways you can keep your heart healthy that also make you feel great! Being active for at least thirty minutes each day can lower your blood sugar. Many activities that are great for your heart are also fun: walking outside, biking, swimming, dancing, tennis, golf, stretching, light weight exercises, yard work

Don't forget to have plenty rest and eat a healthy diet. A large part of being healthy with high blood sugar is to eat a great diet. Not only will eating healthy help your blood sugar and your heart health, but it can also help you feel better and lower stress! These foods will help to keep you full. Also, eating 5 or 6 small meals each day can keep your blood sugar at a lower level and keep your blood sugar more even all day long.

There are so many tasty meal options to choose from: whole grains, vegetables, lean meats, fish, nuts, salad, leafy greens, brown rice, beans.

To prevent diabetes and to treat diabetes, do not eat or drink foods with added sugar. Limit fruits to 2-3 servings per day of raw fruit. Juices have too much sugar. If you have a family history of diabetes then your risk for getting this disease is higher. If you are over weight your risk are higher also. Eat healthily, exercise daily, and see your doctor regularly for early diagnosis and the best treatment. Keep your blood sugar in the normal range (60-100). It will lower your chances of having heart disease, strokes, kidney disease, blindness, and blockages of blood flow to your feet and toes.

IH is a collaborative student organization of professional students from Virginia Commonwealth University who provide health education and outreach in the community.

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