

Your Health



Deadly Heart Disease



According to the American Heart Association, about 70,000 people in the US have heart attacks each year, ultimately killing about 114,000 of those affected. Cardiovascular disease is prevalent in both genders as it is the leading cause of death in men and women.

February is Heart Health Month. You can show support by wearing red on National Wear Red Day to raise awareness of the very serious condition. Heart attacks and strokes are considered risks from cardiovascular disease.

These alarming facts from the American Heart Association are meant to inspire you to become serious about heart health for you and your loved ones:

- Cardiovascular disease claims more lives than all forms

of all cancers and chronic lower respiratory disease combined.

- Nearly half of all African-American adults have some form of cardiovascular disease.
- Approximately every 40 seconds, an American will have a heart attack.
- The average age for the first heart attack in men is 65 years old; it is 71 years in women.
- Strokes are the leading cause of serious long-term disability in the United States.
- Between 2013 and 2030,

medical costs of coronary heart disease were expected to increase by about 100 percent. The cost during 2012 and 2013 was \$199.6 billion.

- Stroke accounts for 1 of every 20 deaths in the United States. A stroke kills someone in American about every 4 minutes.
- About 85.7 million American adults have high-blood pressure. This is a contributing factor to cardiovascular disease.
- Nearly half of those with

high-blood pressure do not have it under control.

- Coronary heart disease accounts for over one in seven deaths in the U.S., or about 360,000 people annually.
 - About 92.1 million American adults are living with some form of cardiovascular disease or the after-effects of stroke.
- Make this year about getting on top of your heart health and not becoming a statistic. Consult with your doctor if you think your heart is at risk.

Grow an Epic Beard

Beards don't only exude a level of confidence in men; they also give surprising health benefits and even highlight a campaign used to raise cancer awareness. This winter, protect your face from the sun's UV rays and provide a comforting warmth to your face.

GROWING PAINS

If you have remained clean-shaven for most of your life, you may be unaware of how uncomfortable the beginning phase of beard growing can be. Don't let this dissuade you; instead understand why the discomfort occurs and what you can do to lessen it.

Depending on how fast and full your beard begins to grow, discomfort levels may differ from person to person. Most of the time, the itchiness occurs as your facial hair begins curling into other spots on your face, possibly making it dry. Seek the assistance of a dermatologist if the irritation is causing you to break out or creating intense discomfort.

You can be prescribed strong facial exfoliators to keep your face moisturized and beard happy.

ARE THERE REALLY HEALTH BENEFITS?

Professional dermatologists believe that growing a beard promotes enhancement to your overall health. Here are a few common ideas that might convince you to put down the razor:

- According to Radiation Protection Dosimetry, a beard can block up to 95 percent of UV rays. This protection from the sun can be beneficial in

lowering the risk of skin cancer and preventing wrinkles from developing.

- Allergy and Asthma Care of New York states that facial hair can trap dust and pollen before it finds its way into your respiratory system, greatly reducing asthma and

allergy symptoms.

- A thick beard will keep your face warm during frigid winter temperatures.

NO-SHAVE NOVEMBER CAMPAIGN

With support from organizations like the Prevent

Cancer Foundation, No-Shave November has raised millions of dollars for cancer awareness, prevention, research and education.

This winter, do more than grow an epic beard. Donate to a great cause that helps your peers and maybe even some-

one in your family.

During No-Shave November, charities urge you to put down your razor for a month and donate the money you would usually spend for shaving. Make it a community event filled with sponsors and supporters.



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Prostate Cancer Risk

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer to affect American men but is oftentimes manageable with treatment. Catching it early is key.

This is achieved by knowing the signs and symptoms, and following proper screening guidelines.

According to the Prostate Cancer Foundation, there is no set age for men to begin screening. This is largely due to the disease occurring because of lifestyle and family history. Based on these factors, your personal doctor will be able to suggest a recommended timeframe for when and how often you should be screened.

WHAT IS PROSTATE CANCER?

Prostate cancer begins when cells in prostate glands begin growing uncontrollably. These glands are only found in men, below the bladder and in front of the rectum.

The most common type of prostate cancer is adenocarcinomas, which develop from the gland cells. In rare cases, it can grow and spread quickly, but more commonly it is a slow mover. This gives men a great advantage in discovering and correcting the disease.

SYMPTOMS

Besides being screened, you can pay attention to these symptoms laid out by the PCF:

- Frequent urination, especially at night;
- Weak, dribbling or holding back urination;
- Painful urination or pain in the lower back, hips, pelvis or thighs; and
- Blood in the urine.

If you notice any of these symptoms, speak with your

doctor immediately.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE SCREENING?

There are two common procedures used by professionals to discover signs of prostate cancer. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention breaks down how they are accomplished.

Digital rectal exam: Your doctor inserts a gloved finger into the rectum to gain access to the prostate and feel for lumps or abnormalities.

Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test: This is administered to monitor the levels of PSA in a person's blood. PSA is a substance made by the prostate, and high levels in the blood can mean there is an issue with the prostate, including cancer.

TREATMENT

The type of treatment your doctor chooses for a fight against prostate cancer depends on the stage of can-

cer, the patient's age, the likelihood that treatment will provide a cure and how the patient feels about the side effects.

Much like other cancer treatments, the options may include radiation, chemotherapy, hormone therapy or even surgery.

Talk with your doctor this winter about your concern of developing prostate cancer, especially if someone in your family has been affected.



Flu Shot and Pregnant Women

Influenza affects both men and women, but those who are pregnant are more likely to suffer from severe illness. The toll the flu takes on mom may sometimes involve hospitalization and can even cause damage to a developing baby.

If you're expecting this winter, make sure to schedule an appointment with your doctor about acquiring the shot. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is a large body of scientific studies supporting the safety of flu vaccines for pregnant women and their babies.

WHY RECEIVE THE VACCINE?

While pregnant, a woman's body goes through many changes to the immune system, heart and lungs, which makes them more prone to falling severely ill from the flu. The vaccine protects their weakened systems and is even shown to protect the child after birth.

This is thanks to a woman's ability to pass down antibodies to their baby during the last three months of pregnancy.

The CDC recommends all women receive the traditional flu shot while pregnant. There is not enough research to support the nasal spray vaccine to prove its effectiveness.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Commonly, pregnant women only suffer from the same side effects as others who receive it. These may include the following:

- Soreness, redness or swelling near the location where the shot was administered;
 - Headache and fever; and
 - Muscle aches and fatigue.
- Be honest with your doctor

about the concerns you may have about the flu vaccine.

By researching your medical history, your physician can ensure that you are not exposing yourself or your new baby to any health risks.

BREASTFEEDING

It is safe to get the flu shot while breastfeeding. This means that if you decided to wait until after childbirth to receive the flu vaccine, your baby can still benefit.

Women also can pass down these important antibodies to their child through breastfeeding. This is incredibly important while your child is less than six months old — too young to receive the vaccine himself.



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Working in Winter Weather

Those who make their livings outdoors know that their careers don't take a break just because it's cold. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, men account for 91 percent of the construction industry. This means they are at a much higher risk for serious health hazards during the cold.

This statistic reported by OSHA includes workers such as laborers, electricians and plumbers. These positions are crucial to Americans who need assistance when pipes freeze or a furnace suffers from an electrical problem.

If you are in a field that requires you to travel outdoors year-round, are you taking proper measures to stay safe?

ARRIVE SAFELY

On-the-job safety begins before you arrive at the worksite. Be sure to take proper precautions depending on road conditions before your commute to work.

Keep an eye on your local weather forecasts and leave early to allow time to drive slowly if ice or snow is present.

OSHA also recommends having important vehicle components inspected before the cold arrives. Here are a few of its suggestions:

- **Brakes:** Inspect the level of your brake fluid and the integrity of the braking system's components, such as, pads, rotors, calipers and hoses.

- **Electrical system:** Always have your battery checked before winter, as cold weather will expose any faults, possibly leaving you stranded. Also have an expert test the starter and alternator to ensure they work properly.



- **Tires:** Driving on tires with poor tread depth is dangerous, especially on ice and snow. Make sure tread is at the recommended levels or replace them.

DRESS FOR THE JOB

While working in frigid temperatures, it's important to

dress in at least three layers of loose-fitting clothing. OSHA says an inner layer of wool will be efficient in holding body heat, a middle layer of wool provides insulation when wet, and an outer wind-repelling layer allows ventilation.

Make sure all exposed skin is covered when dealing with

temperatures that promote frostbite. Hats, knit masks, insulated gloves and waterproof boots are all necessary.

MORE SAFETY TIPS

For those working with restoring electricity that has been knocked out from ice or snow, always be aware of your

surroundings. When working in snow, the moisture can reduce the insulation integrity of protective equipment.

Watch your step. Slips and falls are common occurrences when working outdoors. Take caution when working around ice, and always wear proper footwear.

Resolutions for Women

The beginning of each new year gives us the chance to form a fresh start and get on top of our health. Women can take advantage of this new beginning by changing behaviors that lead to common diseases and enhancing their overall lifestyle.

COMMIT TO VISITING THE DOCTOR

Many common health conditions found primarily in women can be treated if they are discovered early in the development stage. Consider your age and follow these guidelines set by the American Cancer Society.

- **Breast cancer:** Women ages 40 to 44 may begin an annual breast cancer screening with mammograms if they choose. Ages 45 to 54 should follow a strict annual mammogram screening. Those 55 and older can safely switch to breast exams every other year.

- **Cervical cancer:** From age 21 to 29, women should have a Pap test every three years; women 20 to 65 years old every five years. Women over 65 years should discontinue testing.

RETHINK HOW YOU EAT

Resolving to lose weight this year will provide you with many health benefits. A healthy weight lowers the risks of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Consider scheduling an appointment with a nutritionist in your area to creating a diet filled with fat-killing foods such as leafy greens, lean proteins and plenty of water.

GET PHYSICAL

The Centers for Disease



Control and Prevention state that physical activity doesn't need to be strenuous to achieve health benefits. In fact, women of all ages gain an advantage by committing 15 to 20 minutes of moderate activity into their daily routine.

Keep in mind, if you already suffer from chronic health

problems, such as heart disease, diabetes or obesity, check with your doctor before beginning a new physical activity program.

LIMIT ALCOHOL INTAKE

Women are much more susceptible to health problems brought on by alcohol

than men. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism states this is due to women typically weighing less and retaining less water in their bodies.

Here are some of the risks women face from alcohol abuse:

- Women who drink are

more likely to develop liver inflammation;

- Women are more at risk for alcohol-related heart disease; and

- Women who have one drink per day have an increased chance of developing breast cancer than women who do not drink at all.

Women's Skin Health

Winter's frigid temperatures and dry air can have devastating effects on women's sensitive skin. It's important to help your skin adapt to the changing temperature conditions as it loses the ability to regulate itself.

Learn to protect yourself this winter by taking on a routine that supports cold-weather temperatures. By making minor adjustments to your already present skin-care habits, you can spend the winter with exceptional skin.

STAY MOISTURIZED

When choosing moisturizing products for protection during the winter, there are a few things to look for. Remember the following tips from the Environmental Working Group.

Lotion is a great line of defense in chapped or drying skin. Be sure you're stocked up before the cold arrives. When choosing the best moisturizer, look for thick, creamy options and avoid anything with a fragrance.

Manufacturers are not required to disclose ingredients that create scents. This means, there may be dangerous chemicals involved, including hormone disruptors, allergens and asthma triggers.

The best time to lather up with lotion is while your skin is still moist. Limit the time in the tub and avoid using bubble bath during the winter, as it accelerates the drying of skin.

For those struggling to find a lotion that doesn't assist in moisturizing or irritate their skin, schedule an appointment with a local dermatologist. They will determine the best method to keep your skin



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healthy while the temperatures are frigid.

DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

Just as lotion helps moisten the exterior of your skin, you'll want to drink the recommended amount of water to hydrate from the inside. Naturally

hydrated skin will require much less help from over-the-counter products.

Eating plenty of nutritious fruits and vegetables is another great way to stay hydrated. Think of recipes that include moisture-rich foods such as strawberries, pineapple, orang-

es and green peppers to mix into your diet this winter.

DON'T FORGET YOUR LIPS

The skin on our lips is much thinner than the rest of our bodies, and winter's dry air may make them extremely

chapped and irritated.

Make sure you always have an FDA-approved lip balm readily available and avoid licking your lips. The extra moisture caused from licking lips eventually evaporates and makes the problem even worse.