

# Safety Circular

February 2021

## American Heart Month—February 2021

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women, but you can do a lot to protect your heart and stay healthy.

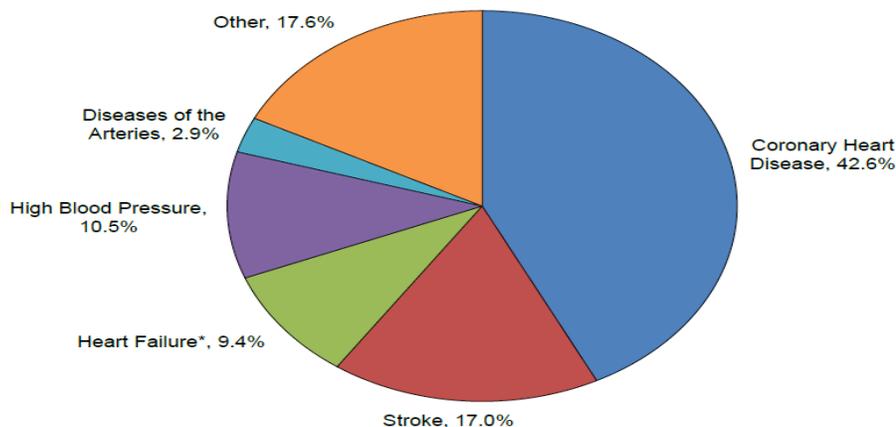
Heart-healthy living involves understanding your risk, making choices, and taking steps to reduce your chances of getting heart disease, including coronary heart disease, the most common type. Coronary and other types of heart disease cause heart attacks, but by taking preventive measures, you can lower your risk of developing heart disease and also improve your overall health and well-being.

### FACTS

- ◆ About 15,334,000 people in the U.S. currently have coronary heart disease.
- ◆ Cardiovascular disease accounted for 859,125 deaths in the US in 2017.
- ◆ Cardiovascular diseases claim more lives each year than all forms of cancer and Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease combined.
- ◆ Cardiovascular disease is the leading global cause of death. CDC accounted for approximately 17.8 million deaths in 2017. This number is expected to grow to more than 22.2 million by 2030, according to a 2014 study.



### Percentage breakdown of deaths attributable to cardiovascular disease, US, 2017



# Know the Difference

## Cardiovascular Disease

### *The Big Umbrella*

Cardiovascular disease is the term for all types of diseases that affect the heart or blood vessels, including coronary heart disease (clogged arteries), which can cause heart attacks, stroke, heart failure, and peripheral artery disease.

## Heart Disease

### *A type of cardiovascular disease*

“Heart disease” is a catch-all phrase for a variety of conditions that affect the heart’s structure and function. Keep in mind – all heart diseases are cardiovascular diseases, but not all cardiovascular diseases are heart disease. The most common type of heart disease is coronary heart disease.

## Coronary Heart Disease

### *A type of heart disease*

Coronary heart disease is often referred to simply as “heart disease”, although it’s not the only type of heart disease. Another term for it is coronary artery disease. Coronary heart disease occurs when plaque (a combination of fat, cholesterol, calcium, and other substances found in the blood) builds up in your arteries or atherosclerosis. The plaque reduces the amount of oxygen-rich blood getting to your heart, which can cause chest pain (also called angina). Plaque can also lead to blood clots, which block blood flow and are the most common cause of a heart attack.



## What can you do to protect yourself from cardiovascular diseases?

*There’s a lot you can do to protect your heart*

*Ask your doctor about your blood pressure, cholesterol, and A1C*

*Reduce the sodium, and increase the fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your diet.*

*Be physically active*



February is

*Heart Health*  
Awareness Month



*Maintain a healthy weight*

*Don’t smoke*

*Manage Stress*

*Keep your diabetes under control*

Wear red on the first Friday in February for National Wear Red Day to raise awareness about heart disease and encourage others to do the same.

# 5 Ways to Improve Your Heart Health

To mark American Heart Month, NHLBI, one of the National Institutes of Health, is inviting people across the country to team up and join #OurHearts, a national heart health initiative that encourages people to improve heart health together. “Studies show that having positive, close relationships and feeling connected to others benefits overall health, blood pressure, weight, and more,” said NHLBI’s Dr. David Goff, director of cardiovascular sciences.

Consider these tips that can help lower your risk of heart disease:

**Risk:** Inactivity

**Solution:** Move throughout your day. Aim for at least 150 minutes each week of physical activity. Build up to activity that gets your heart beating faster and leaves you a little breathless. If you’re busy, try breaking your daily activity into 10-minute chunks.

**Risk:** An unhealthy diet

**Solution:** Serve more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes. Choose fat calories wisely by limiting saturated fat and avoiding trans fats as much as possible. Serve a variety of protein rich foods.

**Risk:** Smoking, even occasionally

**Solution:** Quitting can be beneficial to your overall health, even if you’ve smoked for years. Set a quit date and let those close to you know. Join a support group and find resources like smokefree.gov.

**Risk:** Inadequate or poor-quality sleep

**Solution:** Sleeping 7-8 hours each night helps improve heart health. Try going to bed and waking up at the same time each day. Getting a 30 min daily dose of sunlight may also improve sleep.

**Risk:** Uncontrolled Stress

**Solution:** To help manage stress, try relaxation therapy and increase physical activity. Talk to someone you trust.

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The Safety Circular, a publication of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Risk Management Department, is published monthly in an effort to promote and enhance risk management awareness on issues relating to TDCJ employees. Design and layout of the Safety Circular is performed by Paul Wilder, Risk Management. Comments, suggestions and safety related items are welcome.

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