

# Healthy People

## February ~ AMERICAN HEART MONTH

The Million Hearts® initiative launched by the U.S. Government and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. How can you reduce your risk? One way is to know your ABCS.

Heart disease and stroke are the first and fourth leading causes of death in the United States. Heart disease is responsible for 1 of every 4 deaths in the country. For some groups, such as African Americans, the burden is even greater. As a nation, we can—and must—change these numbers. The good news is that heart disease and stroke can be prevented, and February—American Heart Month—is a great time to refresh your memory on the small but important actions you can take..

- Ask your health care provider about taking Aspirin.
- Make control your goal: if you have high Blood Pressure, work with your health care provider to get it under control.
- Find out how to best manage high Cholesterol.
- Stop Smoking—or don't start.

### **A: Aspirin**

Talk to your health care provider and team to see if taking an aspirin each day is right for you.

### **B: Blood Pressure Control**

High blood pressure is one of the leading causes of heart disease and stroke. One in three American adults has high blood pressure—that's about 70 million people. Unfortunately, less than half of people with high blood pressure have their condition under control. Work with your health care team to find out if you have high blood pressure. If you do, take steps to reduce it:

- Get active by exercising for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Eat a heart-healthy diet that is high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium, saturated and trans fats, and cholesterol.
- Follow your health care provider's instructions when it comes to taking medicines or measuring your blood pressure at home.

### **C: Cholesterol**

High cholesterol affects 1 in 3 American adults. Getting a simple blood test is the only way you can know if you have high cholesterol. Your doctor can suggest steps you can take to prevent high cholesterol or to reduce your levels if they are high.

### **S: Smoking**

Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you're a smoker, quit as soon as possible, and if you don't smoke, don't start. Get help from 1-800-QUIT-NOW or Smokefree.gov.

Learn more about Million Hearts® and ways to protect your heart during February and throughout the year at [millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov).