

Mnozhiyaadaa

LTBB Community Health

February 2022: American Heart Month

The second edition of *Mnozhiyaadaa*, or “Live in Good Health”, focuses on Heart Health for American Heart Month in February. Heart health is very complex. But there are simple practices that can help keep such

a complex organ healthy.

Let’s get a better understanding of what heart health is and the ways we can be more involved in a having a healthy heart.

“One in every four deaths in the U.S. is caused by heart disease.”

Heart Disease

Several terms come to mind when we think of heart conditions: high blood pressure, chest pain, palpitations, heart attack, chest tightness, enlarged heart, et-cetera. We tend to view all of these as singular conditions. But, in reality, they are all signs of one very common condition: Heart Disease.

Heart disease can manifest in several ways, but it is almost always related to **atherosclerosis**, or the narrowing/hardening of the arteries due to plaque build up. **Plaque** is made up of fat, cholesterol, calcium, and other substances in the blood. Plaque builds up over time and we do not always know we have narrowed arteries until a medical emergency occurs.

According to the CDC, one in every four deaths in the U.S. is caused by heart disease. It is the number one cause of death in Native Americans. Heart disease can be fatal, but if we take the right steps to be healthy, it does not have to be.

Information has been adapted from www.CDC.gov and www.heart.org.

What's

Happening?

*For each moon, Charla, RD, will be sending out a 13 Moons Challenge to incorporate traditional foods into our diet

*Marlene, Wellness Advocate, posts YouTube videos for her Get Back On Track program.

Complications of Heart Disease

There is no way for us to stop the effects that aging and genetics have on our blood vessels, but with a healthy diet of traditional foods and increased movement in our day, we have the tools to prevent severe complications of heart disease. The slow build up of plaque in our blood vessels can lead to several possible conditions of heart disease.

Hypertension– AKA high blood pressure. Blood pressure refers to how fast/hard your blood is pumping against the walls of the arteries. Blood pressure varies throughout the day depending on our activity and the things we eat. A normal resting blood pressure is less than 120/80, but it is important to speak to your healthcare provider about what your blood pressure range should be. Called “the silent killer”, blood pressure can be elevated and we may not know it until we get checked by a healthcare provider. High blood pressure causes your heart to not work properly and can hurt other organs such as the kidneys, eyes, and brain.

High Cholesterol– Cholesterol is a fatty substance in the blood. Elevated cholesterol is mainly caused by eating fatty foods, not getting enough exercise, smoking, and drinking alcohol. The higher the cholesterol is, the more plaque that builds up in the blood vessels and puts us at risk for complications. Because the plaque causes the arteries to be more narrow, if a blood clot forms, it could cause blood to not flow to the heart properly and puts you at risk for heart attack or stroke.

Myocardial Infarction (MI)– AKA heart attack. This occurs when the blood flow to part of the heart is blocked by a blood clot. If the clot cuts off the blood flow completely, the part of the heart supplied by that artery begins to die. This means permanent damage to the heart. The heart is weakened and unable to pump as much blood as usual. Sign/symptoms can include chest discomfort or pain, lightheadedness, nausea, vomiting, jaw pain, neck pain, back pain, pain or discomfort in left arm or shoulder, shortness of breath.

Ischemic Stroke– AKA stroke. Occurs when blood flow through the artery that supplies blood to the brain becomes blocked. This blockage is usually caused by a blood clot. Depending on which part of the brain the stroke affects, the body loses it’s ability to perform certain functions such as speech and movement. In order for the body to be able to perform these functions again, rehabilitation is usually needed. Signs/symptoms can be remembered by using the acronym **F.A.S.T.**: **F**acial drooping, **A**rm weakness, **S**peech difficulty, **T**ime to call 911. For proper treatment, it is important to act **FAST** if you experience symptoms of a stroke.

Speak with your healthcare provider about your risks for heart disease and what you can do to prevent serious complications.

Information has been adapted from www.cdc.gov, www.heart.org, and www.ihs.gov

The Thirteen Moons

February is the time for the Makwa Giizis, or Bear Moon. This is the beginning of the Anishinaabe lunar calendar. During the winter months, we give earth mother time to rest. We are reminded during this time to also give ourselves time to rest and heal.



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