



HEALTH AWARENESS

February 2024

THE BEAT GOES ON: AMERICAN HEART MONTH

February is [American Heart Month](#), a dedicated period aimed at raising awareness about cardiovascular health and encouraging individuals to adopt heart-healthy lifestyles. Heart disease remains a leading cause of death in the United States, making this campaign crucial in educating the public about prevention and early detection.

American Heart Month strives to inform and educate about the risks of heart disease and the importance of adopting heart-healthy habits. Through educational campaigns like those listed below, employees are empowered with knowledge to make informed choices about their lifestyles.

Encourage Healthy Lifestyles: The campaign emphasizes the adoption of habits such as regular exercise, maintaining a balanced diet, managing stress, and limiting alcohol consumption. These lifestyle changes are instrumental in preventing heart disease and promoting overall well-being.

Promote Early Detection: Regular check-ups and screenings are crucial in identifying risk factors and early signs of heart disease. American Heart Month encourages individuals to schedule routine health check-ups, blood pressure screenings, and cholesterol checks.

Community Engagement: Promote American Heart Month through local events, seminars, and activities to encourage participation and foster a sense of collective responsibility towards cardiovascular well-being.

Empowerment through Education: Knowledge is a powerful tool in the prevention of heart disease. Educational initiatives can provide information about risk factors, symptoms of heart-related issues, and steps individuals can take to maintain a healthy heart.

REDUCE STRESS FOR A HEALTHIER HEART

Whether it's from everyday deadlines or financial struggles, stress shows up often in life. And your body reacts to it: your heart rate increases, your blood vessels narrow—and over time, these little blows can add up and do damage to your health, particularly your heart. But while you can't always limit the amount of stress in your life, you can work on changing how you respond to it. Try these techniques on your own or find a teacher or class to help you get started.



Meditation. One of the most studied approaches for managing stress involves developing your ability to stay focused on the present, instead of worrying about the past or future.

Deep breathing. Many people don't breathe slowly and deeply, but it is relaxing and something you can do anytime, anywhere.

Guided imagery. This involves a series of steps that include relaxing and visualizing the details of a calm, peaceful setting, such as the ocean.

Progressive muscle relaxation. To feel the effect, first tense your muscles for a few seconds, then relax them. Start by tensing and relaxing your toes.

Getting your mind and body to a place of calm doesn't always mean being still, however. Other healthy ways to manage stress include taking a yoga or tai chi class, talking to a professional counselor, joining an art class, or meeting up with friends for a nature walk.

Combining de-stressors like these with other healthy habits can go a long way toward strengthening your heart. Eat more veggies, fruits and whole grains, and less sodium, sugar and saturated fats, for example. Move your body more – like through walking meetings. Get enough good, quality sleep. And develop a strong social support system. Then rethink some of the familiar ways you may be coping with stress, such as drinking alcohol, smoking, or overeating. They can actually worsen your stress – and your health.

One in five deaths is due to heart disease, even though the disease is largely preventable. Keeping your heart healthy starts with living a heart-healthy lifestyle. But first, you need to get smart about your heart. Knowing your own risk factors for heart disease can help guide your lifestyle choices, so talk to your healthcare provider to make sure you're clear. Just as important: know your numbers. Your weight, waist size, blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels all affect your heart. If they aren't where they should be, make a pledge to begin improving them.

Adding more physical activity to your day, eating a heart-healthy diet, managing stress, getting enough quality sleep, and not smoking can put you on the path to better heart health.

BENEFITS CORNER

Maintaining good health is a lifelong journey that involves a combination of healthy habits, a balanced diet, regular exercise, and preventative healthcare. One crucial aspect of preventative healthcare is undergoing screenings and seeking early care to detect potential health issues before they escalate. This proactive approach plays a pivotal role in ensuring a longer, healthier life.

Preventative screenings and other services are covered for adults and children, even if the patient has no current symptoms or prior medical history. Treatment for a condition with current symptoms or for a previously diagnosed condition are covered under physician office services or diagnostic services benefits. Many preventive care services by participating providers are covered with no deductible, copayment, or coinsurance. That means CTSI pays participating providers 100% of the maximum allowed amount. Examples of these services include:

- Breast cancer screenings
- Cervical cancer screenings
- Colorectal cancer screenings
- High Blood Pressure tests
- Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus tests
- Cholesterol tests

EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES

Preventative screenings are designed to identify health concerns at their earliest stages when intervention is most effective. Regular check-ups and screenings for conditions such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases empower individuals to take charge of their health. Detecting diseases in their early stages not only improves the chances of successful treatment but also reduces the overall cost of healthcare.

Deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums started over as of January 1, 2024. This includes your prescription annual deductible if you are enrolled in one of CHP's PPO plans, so you may see a slight increase in the cost of your medications. CTSI staff is here to assist you with your health, dental, vision, or life insurance coverage. For questions, contact CTSI at (303) 861-0507.