11-2008

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)

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Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is an illness that affects the heart and/or blood vessels. CVD starts as fatty plaque builds up on the inner wall of the arteries. Over time, this buildup leads to arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. As arteries become more filled with plaque, the space open for blood flow shrinks. The force of the heart pumping blood through ever smaller blood vessels raises blood pressure. The force stresses the arteries and the heart. Hardening of the arteries allows blood to clot within the arteries. If a blood clot breaks off, it could lodge within an artery. Then blood cannot flow to or from the heart. This is when a heart attack happens. If a blood clot breaks off and lodges in an artery in the brain, it causes a stroke.

CVD is the leading cause of death in every county in Kentucky and every state in the nation. It is the leading cause of death for both men and women. Yet, most of the risk factors for CVD can be prevented.

Risk Factors

- Physical inactivity
- Poor nutrition
- Tobacco use
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- High blood cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Family history
- Minority or ethnic heritage

Is your fasting blood sugar

☐ Normal Below 100 mg/dl
☐ Pre-Diabetes Between 100 and 125 mg/dl
☐ Diabetes Higher than 126 mg/dl

Is your blood cholesterol

☐ Excellent Below 200 mg/dl
☐ Fair 200 to 240 mg/dl
☐ Poor Above 240 mg/dl

Is your blood pressure lower than 140/90 mm Hg?

☐ YES ☐ NO

List your risk factors:

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________
4. ________________________________
5. ________________________________
6. ________________________________
7. ________________________________
8. ________________________________
9. ________________________________
What changes could you make to reduce your risk factors?

1. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

6. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

7. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

The best way to prevent CVD is to maintain a healthy weight. Eat well and stay active. Follow the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) dietary guidelines. Have regular check-ups. Make sure your blood pressure, blood sugar and blood cholesterol are within healthy ranges. Your health is your wealth!

Sources

The American Heart Association,
www.americanheart.org

The American Diabetes Association,
www.diabetes.org/about-diabetes.jsp