Getting the Right Care

Throughout the month of February we use the heart as a symbol for love, but it raises an important question—how much love are we showing our hearts? According to the CDC, cardiovascular disease—including heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure—is the number 1 killer of women and men in the United States.

Fortunately, there are many things you can do to reduce your chances of getting heart disease.

You should:
• **Know your blood pressure** and keep it under control
• **Exercise regularly**; Don't smoke
• **Get tested for diabetes** and if you have it, keep it under control
• **Know your cholesterol** and triglyceride levels and keep them under control
• **Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables**; Maintain a healthy weight

Feeling Stressed?

Your heart could be paying the price! Mental stress does more than diminish your sense of well-being; it also can increase your risk of heart disease.

Chronic stress can...
• **Raise blood cholesterol and blood pressure**, resulting in hardening of the arteries.
• **Prompt unhealthy habits** like smoking, overeating and excessive drinking—additional factors that can increase your risk.

To counteract stress...
• **Exercise.** Aim for 30 minutes of moderately intense activity, such as brisk walking, most days of the week.
• **Build-up your support system.** Supportive people can reduce your stress and help you take better care of yourself.
• **Seek help** for depression or anxiety.
Avoid Caregiver Burnout

Many caregivers push themselves too hard. This can lead to feeling "burned out".

To create a healthy balance between caring for others and yourself, our experts suggest the following:

- **Define the problem.** Set limits on your time and energy.
- **Decide on strategies.** Figure out what you can reasonably do and what resources you may need. If you decide you'll visit your mother twice a week to cook, then enlist family members to help on other days.
- **Find personal support.** For example, caregiver support groups can be helpful for sharing resources and offering encouragement.

WAIT! There's More...

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American Heart Awareness Month

Tips for preventing heart disease!

Get the facts!

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