



HEALTH LESSONS
HEART.ORG | 2025

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Introduce yourself –

Say: Today, I will be presenting a health lesson brought to you by the American Heart Association.

The topic is: Warning signs of a heart attack



WHAT WE DO

INVESTING AND SUPPORTING LIFESAVING HEART
AND BRAIN RESEARCH FOR OVER 100 YEARS.

FUNDED PACEMAKERS AND ICDS RESEARCH



Contributed to developing cutting-edge devices, including leadless pacemakers and wearable defibrillators.

DEVELOPMENT OF CPR GUIDELINES AND CONTINUED EFFORTS



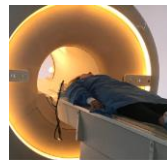
Created CPR and AED guidelines and pushing for laws to require CPR training in schools and more public AEDs to help save lives.

FUNDING HEART DISEASE RESEARCH



Investing in groundbreaking research that has led to life-saving treatments and innovations in cardiovascular care.

FUNDING INNOVATION IN HEART DISEASE DIAGNOSTICS



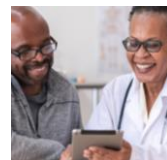
Advancing imaging techniques, such as MRI and CT scans, along with biomarkers for the early detection of heart disease.

FUNDING ACUTE STROKE CARE



Funding research to support timely intervention strategies for stroke patients which has significantly improved survival rates and recovery outcomes.

DEVELOPMENT OF HYPERTENSION GUIDELINES AND RESEARCH



Updated blood pressure guidelines with partners for early detection and care. Funded research on causes, prevention, and treatment.

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The American Heart Association has been investing in and supporting lifesaving heart and brain research for over 100 years. From contributing to the development of the pacemaker, to advancing imaging techniques such as MRI and CT scans, to creating the CPR and AED guidelines, their mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.



HEART DISEASE

More than half of people in the U.S. do not know that heart disease is the leading cause of death.

It kills more people than any other cause, including cancer.

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Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S.—even greater than cancer. The good news is, there’s a lot we can do to prevent or treat it. One of the most important steps is checking your blood pressure. If it’s high, learning how to manage it can make a big difference.



Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic (CKM) Health



Your heart, kidneys, and the way the body creates and uses energy (metabolic health) have different jobs, but together they affect your overall health.

When one area of your health isn't working well, it can hurt other areas.

For example:

- High blood pressure (BP) can harm the heart, raising the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- High BP can damage the kidneys over time, potentially leading to chronic kidney disease.
- High BP often occurs with diabetes and obesity, commonly making CKM health problems worse together.

Most people don't know how closely these problems are connected. Understanding and protecting all three systems can improve overall health and lower your risk of heart disease or stroke.

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The whole body is connected and works together like a team. Your heart, kidneys, and the way the body creates and uses energy (metabolic health) have different jobs, but together they affect your overall health. A new concept for how your heart, kidneys and energy system connect and share work is called cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic health, or CKM health.

CKM health is about your overall health and taking action early to prevent a heart attack, heart failure or stroke.

The American Heart Association is leading the way in helping people understand and manage their overall health by focusing on the whole person, not just one disease at a time

When one area of your health isn't working well it can hurt other areas.

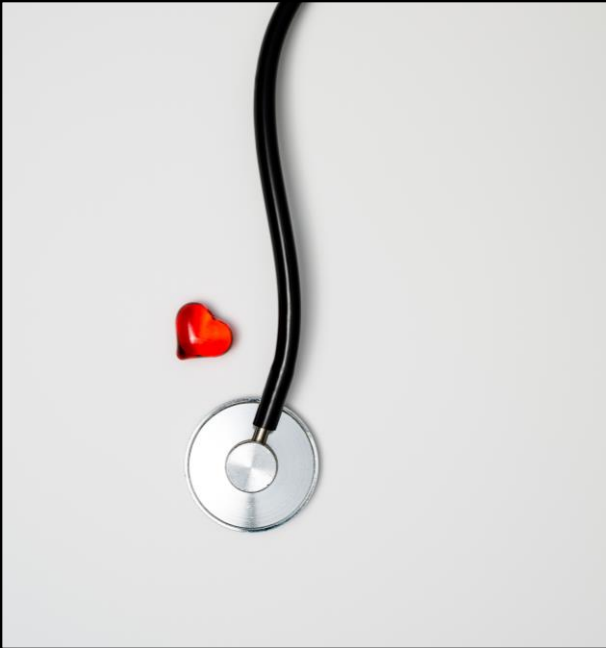
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High BP can damage the kidneys over time, potentially leading to chronic kidney disease.

High BP often occurs with diabetes and obesity, commonly making CKM health problems worse together.

Most people don't know how closely these problems are connected. That's why the American Heart Association is working to teach everyone how to protect all three systems together to improve overall health and lower the risk of heart disease or stroke.



What will you learn?

Warning Signs of a Heart Attack

- What is it?
- The causes
- How it impacts your health
- The difference between a heart attack and cardiac arrest
- How to manage it
- Next Steps

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Today, you will learn what are the warning signs of a heart attack, how it impacts your health, the causes, how to manage it, and a next-step action plan. The lesson should take about 15 - 20 minutes. Feel free to take pictures of any of the slides.

A heart attack happens when something blocks the blood from getting to the heart. When this happens, the heart doesn't get the oxygen it needs to work.

Types of heart attacks:

- STEMI (ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction) – **A complete blockage** requiring immediate attention.
- NSTEMI (Non-ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction) – **A partial blockage** that still requires urgent care.

What is a Heart Attack?



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Types of heart attacks:

- STEMI (ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction) – A complete blockage requiring immediate attention.
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Question to the Group: Do you know someone who has had a heart attack?

- ✓ **Severe Chest Pain** – a tightness, pressure, or squeezing sensation.
- ✓ **Pain or Discomfort in Other Parts of the Upper Body** – arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- ✓ **Shortness of Breath** – even without chest pain.
- ✓ **Cold Sweats**
- ✓ **Other Signs:** nausea, dizziness, or extreme fatigue – sometimes the only symptoms, *especially in women.*

Learning to Spot the Warning Signs



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Let's talk about some common signs and symptoms that might indicate a heart issue:

- Severe Chest Pain – a tightness, pressure, or squeezing sensation.
- Pain or Discomfort in Other Parts of the Upper Body – arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of Breath – even without chest pain.
- Cold Sweats
- Other Signs: nausea, dizziness, or extreme fatigue – sometimes the only symptoms, *especially in women.*

The Importance of Calling 911

- If you suspect a heart attack, **call 911 immediately.**
- **Do NOT** drive yourself to the hospital. Emergency responders can start treatment on the way.
- **Stay calm**, follow dispatcher instructions, and do not hang up until help arrives.

What To Do



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Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, call your local emergency number. Every minute matters! It's best to call your local emergency number to get to the emergency room right away. Emergency medical services (EMS) staff can begin treatment when they arrive. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital, too.

The Importance of Calling 911:

- If you suspect a heart attack, call 911 immediately.
- Do NOT drive yourself to the hospital. Emergency responders can start treatment on the way.
- Stay calm, follow dispatcher instructions, and do not hang up until help arrives.

Taking care of your health is one of the best ways to prevent a heart attack, which happens when blood can't get to your brain.

Heart Attacks Can Be Preventable!



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Heart attacks can be preventable- Taking care of your health is one of the best ways to prevent a heart attack, which happens when blood can't get to your brain.



Things That Put You At Risk

Risk Factors of a Heart Attack

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors (things you can't change):

- Age, family history, gender, ethnicity.

Modifiable Risk Factors (things you can control):

- High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, lack of exercise, poor diet, obesity, stress, and excessive alcohol use.

By focusing on healthy choices, we can make a positive impact on our well-being!



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Let's empower ourselves by understanding risk factors! Risk factors are things that put you at risk. There are two types of risk factors:

1. Non-Modifiable Risk Factors (things you can't change): Age, family history, gender, ethnicity.
2. Modifiable Risk Factors (things you can control): High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, lack of exercise, poor diet, obesity, stress, and excessive alcohol use.

By focusing on healthy choices, we can make a positive impact on our well-being!

Ask the group: Does anyone know what increases the risk of a heart attack?



Personal Impacts of a Heart Attack:

- Permanent heart muscle damage.
- Reduced ability to perform daily activities.
- Increased risk of future heart attacks.
- Emotional and mental health challenges.



Economic and Family Impact:

- Higher medical bills, time off work, and caregiving strain on loved ones.

Why it Matters



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Economic and Family Impact:

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Is it a **Heart Attack** or **Cardiac Arrest**?

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Ask the group: A heart attack is different from a cardiac arrest- do you know the difference?

In a **Heart Attack**, blood can't get to part of the heart because a key blood vessel is blocked.

In a **Cardiac Arrest**, the heart suddenly stops beating. This is usually caused by an electrical problem that makes the heart beat irregularly.

A heart attack may **CAUSE** cardiac arrest.

What is the Difference?



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In a Heart Attack, blood can't get to part of the heart because a key blood vessel is blocked.

In a Cardiac Arrest, the heart suddenly stops beating. This is usually caused by an electrical problem that makes the heart beat irregularly.

A heart attack may CAUSE cardiac arrest.

Understanding this connection can empower us to take charge of our heart health!

1 Sudden loss of responsiveness

The person doesn't respond, even if you tap them hard on the shoulders or loudly ask if they are OK. The person does not move, speak, blink, or otherwise react.

2 No normal breathing

The person isn't breathing or is only gasping for air.

If they do not get help right away they can die. You need to call 911 and start CPR.

Learn the Warning Signs of Cardiac Arrest



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In a cardiac arrest, there are two main things to look out for:

1. Sudden loss of responsiveness - The person doesn't respond, even if you tap them hard on the shoulders or loudly ask if they are OK. The person does not move, speak, blink, or otherwise react.
2. No normal breathing - The person isn't breathing or is only gasping for air.

If someone has cardiac arrest, doing CPR right away can double or triple their chances of survival. 1. First, call 911 (or local emergency response number). 2. Then start CPR. If there's an automated external defibrillator (AED) nearby, use it as soon as you can. If two people are helping, one should start CPR. The other should call 911 and find the AED. Every minute counts. The odds for survival drop by 10% each minute without help. Emergency staff can also help revive someone whose heart has stopped.



Now we are at the final part of our presentation, which is all about the next steps through the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8. These are eight simple measures that will help keep your heart and brain healthy. Four are focused on behaviors, and four are focused on numbers you need to know.

Four Numbers You Need to Know

Blood Pressure

Less than 120/80 mmHg



LIPIDS

Blood Lipids

Less than 130 mg/dL of non-HDL cholesterol



Healthy Weight

A body mass index of less than 25



Blood Sugar

No history of diabetes and fasting blood glucose of less than 100 mg/dL (or Hemoglobin A1c < 5.7)



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Your blood pressure, cholesterol, weight and blood sugar are the four key numbers you need to know.

Four Health Behaviors You Can Do



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The four key health behaviors are not smoking or vaping, getting adequate sleep, following a healthy diet and getting enough physical activity. These will be the first ones we focus on.

High blood pressure increases the strain on the heart, causing the heart muscle to thicken and stiffen. This can lead to abnormal heart function and raise the risk of stroke, heart attack, kidney failure, and congestive heart failure.

The risk of heart attack or stroke **increases** even more when high blood pressure is present alongside:

- Obesity
- Smoking
- High blood cholesterol
- Diabetes

It's important to stay aware of these connections and maintain a healthy lifestyle for your heart's well-being!

Manage High Blood Pressure



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Know Your Blood Pressure Numbers

High blood pressure is
130/80 or higher

Blood Pressure Categories

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130-139	or	80-89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care professional)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms*, call 911)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

*symptoms: chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking

heart.org/bplevels

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These are the updated American Heart Association blood pressure categories.

- Normal blood pressure is less than 120 for the systolic or top number and less than 80 for the diastolic or bottom number.
- Elevated blood pressure is between 120-129 for the systolic or top number and less than 80 for the diastolic or bottom number.
- Stage 1 high blood pressure or hypertension is now 130-139 systolic, or the top number, or 80-89 diastolic, or bottom number.
- Stage 2 high blood pressure is 140 or higher for the systolic or top number or 90 or higher for the diastolic or bottom number.
- Severe high blood pressure, or hypertension, is anything higher than 180 for the systolic or top number and/or higher than 120 for the diastolic or bottom number. If you don't have symptoms, you should call your health care professional.
- For anything higher than 180 for systolic and higher than 120 for diastolic that includes symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking, you need to call 911 immediately.

Please take a picture of this chart so that you have it with you at all times and

can use it as a reference.

TWO TIPS FOR YOUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS!

- 1 Know Your Numbers:** It's important to know your blood pressure numbers. You can track your blood pressure at home with a validated blood pressure device. Some pharmacies, health clinics and fire stations have free monitoring stations. A high blood pressure diagnosis must be confirmed by a health care professional. Any very low blood pressure reading should also be checked.
- 2 Get Active:** Exercise can help lower high blood pressure levels. It can also improve your mood and clear your mind.

Manage High Blood Pressure



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Get Active: Exercise can help lower high blood pressure levels. It can also improve your mood and clear your mind.

Tobacco use is a **major** risk factor for heart attack and stroke. Nicotine, a chemical in cigarettes and e-cigarettes, causes your heart to beat faster and your blood pressure to rise. Smoking makes clots more likely to form. It can also promote the buildup of plaque in arteries.

Exposure to other people's smoke also increases the risk of heart disease even *for nonsmokers*.

Stop Smoking or Vaping



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Exposure to other people's smoke also increases the risk of heart disease even for nonsmokers.

Taking the first step to quit tobacco and or nicotine is all about understanding the risks for you and your loved ones. Remember, it's never too late to embrace a healthier future!

The risks:

- Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Depression and Anxiety
- Premature Aging

The good news? By making informed choices, we can take charge of our health!

Stop Smoking or Vaping



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- Nicotine and tobacco can raise blood pressure and increase heart rate. It can cause blood vessels to narrow, increasing the risk of heart attacks.
- Nicotine and tobacco can damage blood vessels. It can increase the risk of a stroke by causing blood clots or blocking blood flow to the brain. It can also cause memory problems and dementia later in life.
- Nicotine and tobacco can increase the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. For people with diabetes, it can also make it harder to manage blood sugar levels.
- Smoking is the leading cause of cancer. Nicotine can abnormally speed up the growth of new cells. This has been shown in tumor cells in the breast, colon and lung.
- Nicotine and tobacco can lead to mood swings and heightened anxiety when their effects wear off.
- Smoking can cause premature wrinkles, skin damage and a dull complexion due to reduced blood flow and damage to the skin's elasticity.

TWO TIPS FOR YOUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS!

- 1 Exercise can help you manage stress and cravings when quitting. You'll feel better, too!
- 2 Recognizing what makes you want to smoke, vape or use nicotine is key. This can include things such as stress, certain places or social situations. Try to avoid or manage these triggers, especially at the beginning. Practice deep breathing exercises to help calm your body and mind. Slow, deep breaths can reduce stress and cravings.

You've got this!

Stop Smoking or Vaping



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Here are two tips for success:

1. Exercise can help you manage the stress and cravings when quitting. You'll feel better, too!
2. Recognizing what makes you want to smoke, vape or use nicotine is key. This can include things like stress, certain places, or social situations. Try to avoid or manage these triggers, especially at the beginning. Practice deep breathing exercises to help calm your body and mind. Slow, deep breaths can reduce stress and cravings.

The key takeaway is to get prepared. Start by creating a plan that fits your lifestyle.

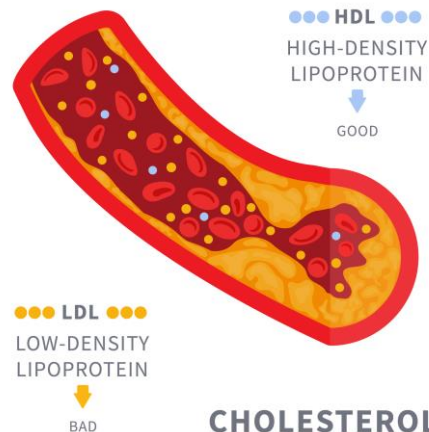
- SET a quit date within the next 7 days. It is best to pick a weekday that doesn't look like it will be too stressful of a day.
- CHOOSE a method: cold turkey or gradually.
- DECIDE if you need help from a health care professional, nicotine replacement or medicine.
- PREPARE for your quit day by planning how to deal with cravings and urges.
- QUIT on your quit day.

If you're over age 20, you should have your cholesterol checked every four to six years as part of a cardiovascular risk assessment. You may need to check it more often if:

- Certain factors put you at higher risk
- You already have heart disease

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in animal-based foods and produced by the body. High cholesterol can harm heart and brain health, increasing the risk of heart disease and certain dementias like Alzheimer's.

Control Cholesterol



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Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in animal-based foods and produced by the body. High cholesterol can harm heart and brain health, increasing the risk of heart disease and certain dementias like Alzheimer's.

There are two types of cholesterol:

- HDL, which is high-density lipoprotein, also known as good cholesterol
- LDL, which is a low-density lipoprotein, also known as bad cholesterol

TIPS FOR SUCCESS!

Know your fats: The fats you eat can affect your cholesterol numbers. Replace saturated fats like butter and whole dairy products with healthy fats. Healthy fats include olive oil, fatty fish, nuts and eggs.

By making these changes and following **Life's Essential 8** you're helping your body stay strong and lowering your chances of having a stroke. Small steps now can make a big difference in your future!

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TWO EXAMPLES FOR YOUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS!

Let's set simple, realistic health goals!
For example, you may aim to swap
sugary drinks for refreshing water with
lemon or enjoy a daily 30-minute walk
with your dog!

These small changes can boost your
energy, enhance your quality of life,
and lead to a longer, healthier future!

Making the Commitment



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with your dog!

These small changes can boost your energy, enhance your quality of life, and
lead to a longer, healthier future!

Encourage participants to set small, achievable health goals.



Know the Heart Attack Warning Signs.



Think You're Having a Heart Attack? Call 911 Immediately.



Follow Life's Essential 8 for a Healthy Heart.

Remember, taking care of your heart today could save **your life** or **someone else's** tomorrow.

You have the power to start making small changes today!

Preventing Heart Attacks

KEY TAKEAWAYS



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Key takeaways for today to remember:

- Know the Heart Attack Warning Signs.
- Think You're Having a Heart Attack? Call 911 Immediately.
- Follow Life's Essential 8 for a Healthy Heart.

Remember, taking care of your heart today could save your life or someone else's tomorrow.

You have the power to start making small changes today!

Stay In Touch



Follow us **@AmericanHeart** on social media and DM us to let us know how you're doing!



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Thank you for your time. I hope you enjoyed this presentation. I invite you to keep in touch with the American Heart Association. You can follow them on social media for great, easy to follow health tips you can trust!



MORE RESOURCES



Find Help

Search for financial, legal, transportation and other aid. A free resource to guide your path to a healthier, happier you!



The American Heart Association YouTube

Watch training videos, take courses and keep learning about how you and your loved ones can stay healthy!

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