

## February is American Heart Month—Keep it Healthy and Strong

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Learn about heart disease prevention. About every 25 seconds, an American will have a coronary event. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and is a major cause of disability. The most common heart disease in the United States is coronary heart disease, which often appears as a heart attack. In 2009, an estimated 785,000 Americans had a new coronary attack, and about 470,000 will have a recurrent attack. About every 25 seconds, an American will have a coronary event, and about one every minute will die from one.<sup>1</sup>



The chance of developing coronary heart disease can be reduced by taking steps to prevent and control factors that put people at greater risk. Additionally, knowing the signs and symptoms of heart attack are crucial to the most positive outcomes after having a heart attack. People who have survived a heart attack can also work to reduce their risk of another heart attack or a stroke in the future. For more information on heart disease and stroke, visit CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention.

### **Diseases and Conditions That Put Your Heart at Risk**

Other conditions that affect your heart or increase your risk of death or disability include arrhythmia, heart failure, and peripheral artery disease (PAD). High cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, and secondhand smoke are also risk factors associated with heart disease. For a full list of diseases and conditions along with risk factors and other health information associated with heart disease, visit the American Heart Association.

### **Know Your Signs and Symptoms**

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense; however, most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath. May occur with or without chest discomfort.

Other signs. These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)