

Know Your ABCs of Heart Health >>

The ABCs of heart health are really simple.

“**A**” stands for appropriate aspirin therapies as directed by a physician.

“**B**” stands for blood pressure control.

“**C**” stands for cholesterol management.

“**S**” is for smoking cessation.

February is American Heart Month, and it's as good a time as any to study your ABCs of heart health and learn how they can help keep you and your heart healthy.

Cardiovascular disease (including heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure) is the leading cause of disability and the number one killer for men and women in the United States.

Men are more than twice as likely as women to die from preventable CVD (Cardiovascular disease). About 1 of 3 U.S. adults has high blood pressure, and only 47% have their high blood pressure under control.

CVD does not affect all groups of people the same way. If you have a close relative who has heart disease, you are at a higher risk for CVD.

Death rates due to heart disease seem to be higher for people who live in the South, and African Americans are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to have high blood pressure and develop the condition earlier in life.

The good news? Heart disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions. Risk factors for CVD which one can control: diet, physical activity, tobacco use, obesity, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and diabetes.

Tobacco use and lack of physical activity are particularly troublesome in Northwest Georgia. The adult smoking rate is 27%, and the average rate of adults reporting they are physically inactive is 28.2% compared to the national benchmark of 21%.

Talk with your health care provider to begin your journey to better heart health. Here are just a few ideas for making

healthy changes to lower your risk of developing heart disease:

- Using spices to season food instead of salt.
- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke; Ga Tobacco Quitline 1/877-270-STOP
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Get active and eat healthy.

Resources:

American Heart Association

<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>

CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/>

Million Hearts Initiative

<http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/about/hs/prevention.html>