



AMERICAN HEART MONTH

February 7, 2024 – This February, District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) is observing American Heart Month by promoting tobacco cessation and encouraging individuals to take action to protect their heart health.

Not all risk factors for heart disease, such as family history, are controllable. However, knowing the most common risk factors and taking preventative measures can reduce your risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in five deaths in the US were caused by heart disease. Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the US. CDC lists three key risk factors for heart disease.

- Smoking
- High Blood Pressure
- High Blood Cholesterol

Tobacco use is the first key risk factor for heart disease. Cigarette smoking can damage blood vessels, as well as increase the risk for heart attack and atherosclerosis, or the hardening of the arteries from plaque buildup. Secondhand smoke can also increase the risk for heart disease, while nicotine has been shown to raise blood pressure levels. However, DHD#10 has a Tobacco Treatment program to help residents quit smoking and improve their heart health.

“The DHD#10 Tobacco Treatment program is a free program for individuals who are looking to quit smoking or using tobacco products. Our goal as Tobacco Treatment Specialists is to support you as you quit,” said DHD#10 Tobacco Treatment Program Lead Maegan Sorenson. “We will assist in creating a quit plan, work with your healthcare provider to recommend any NRT (Nicotine Replacement Therapy), and help you find other resources that are available to help you on your quitting journey. We will help you to understand the effects of nicotine and tobacco on your health, and the benefits of quitting.”

High blood pressure, the second risk factor for heart disease, occurs when the pressure of blood in blood vessels is too high. High blood pressure is referred to as a “silent killer” because it typically has no symptoms. High levels of blood cholesterol, the last key risk factor, can cause plaque buildup in arteries and obstruct blood flow, contributing to high blood pressure. Cholesterol is a waxy substance that is present in foods and made in the liver. While medication can be used to decrease blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels, eating a diet low in cholesterol, saturated fats, and trans fats can improve heart health. Getting regular physical activity, defined as 30 minutes a day 5 times per week, is also recommended.

Making healthy lifestyle choices can help protect your heart. Register for DHD#10’s LiveWell4Health tobacco cessation program by visiting:
<https://www.livewell4health.org/tobacco-cessation>.



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For more information on tobacco cessation, please visit <https://mi.mylifemyquit.org/>
or <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/en-us/>.

To read more about risk factors for heart disease, visit:
https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/risk_factors.htm.

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