

February 2024

Office of Integrated Health
Supports Network



Heart Health



Heart disease can happen to anyone at any age. February is Heart Month, the perfect time to learn about the risk for heart disease and the steps to take to manage heart disease.

High rates of obesity and high blood pressure among younger people (ages 35-64) are becoming more prevalent and increasing the risk for heart disease earlier in life. Half of all Americans have at least one of the top three risk factors for heart disease; high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking (1).

Risk Factors and Statistics

1.13 billion people worldwide have hypertension (5). Hypertension is a major risk factor for heart disease that contributes to 1 in 7 deaths in the United States each year. Adults who have intellectual disability have similar risk factors for hypertension as the general population, which includes undesirable dietary and lifestyle factors such as obesity and low physical activity (2).

High cholesterol can increase the risk for heart disease. Having diabetes and obesity, smoking, eating unhealthy foods, and not getting enough physical activity can all contribute to unhealthy cholesterol levels (1).

More than 37 million U.S. adults are current smokers. Smoking damages the blood vessels and can cause heart disease (1).

Conditions and Behaviors that Contribute to Heart Disease

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (DD) have a higher prevalence of untreated tooth decay and gum disease along with higher rates of obesity, edentulous (no or very few teeth), chronic oral and secondary health conditions than the general population (6).

Studies have shown periodontal disease is associated with heart disease. Scientists believe inflammation of the gums caused by periodontal disease may be responsible for the association to increased heart disease. Periodontal disease can also worsen existing heart conditions (3).

Carrying extra weight puts stress on the heart. More than 1 in 3 Americans and nearly 1 in 6 children ages 2 to 19 has obesity (1).

Diabetes causes sugar to build up in the blood. This can damage blood vessels and nerves causing stress to the heart muscle. Nearly 1 in 10 people in the United States has type 2 diabetes (1).

Physical inactivity adds to heart disease. Staying physically active helps keep the heart and blood vessels healthy. Only 1 in 5 adults meets the physical activity guidelines of getting 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity (1).

References

1. Centers Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2023, March). Know Your Risk for Heart Disease. *National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention*.
2. Erickson, S. R., and Kormel, K. (2016). Blood pressure screening, control, and treatment for patients with developmental disabilities in general medicine practices. *Journal of Pharmacy Technology*, 32(6), 234-239. Doi: 10.1177/8755122516663219
3. Harvard Medical School. (2021, February). Gum disease and heart disease: The common thread. *Harvard Health Publishing*.
4. Tyler, C. V., Schramm, S. C., Karafa, M., Tang, A. S., & Jain, A. K. (2011). Chronic disease risks in young adults with autism spectrum disorder: Forewarned is forearmed. *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 116(5), 371-380. Doi: 10.1352/1944-7558-116.5.371
5. World Health Organization (WHO). (2024, January). *Health topics. Hypertension*.
6. Ziegler, J., & Spivack, E. (2018). Nutritional and dental issues in patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *The Journal of the American Dental Association*, 149(4), 317-321. Doi: 10.1016/j.adaj.2017.11.014

Unhealthy eating patterns increase risk of heart disease. Most people eat too much sodium (salt), which increases blood pressure. Replacing foods high in sodium with fresh fruits and vegetables can help lower blood pressure. Only 1 in 10 adults is getting the recommended 5 fruits and vegetables each day. Diets high in trans-fat, saturated fat, and added sugar increases the risk factors for heart disease (1).

Positive Ways to Manage Heart Health

Smoking cessation. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

Manage conditions. People with DD often experience inadequate physician-patient communication, anxiety during office visits, and experience irregular medical care, all of which are noted to be potential reasons for disparities in disease identification, management, and improved outcomes (2).

It is crucial for caregivers to work with a health care team to manage conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. This includes ensuring routine medications are taken consistently, blood pressure monitoring is checked and documented, regular annual physicals are done consistently, along with semi-annual dental cleanings and check-ups.

Encourage heart-healthy eating changes. Eating foods low in trans-fat, saturated fat, sugar and sodium is recommended. At mealtimes, at least half of each "plate" should be filled with vegetables and fruits.

Encourage activity. To stay healthy, individuals should be active at least 150 minutes per week. Try breaking up the activity into 30 minutes intervals throughout the week. These intervals can be broken down into 10-minute blocks of activity throughout the day.

Adults with DD are living longer now than ever before (2). According to a study by Tyler et al, individuals with autism spectrum disorders have an estimated rate of hypertension which is close to 20%, and they have a higher rate of diagnosis of hyperlipidemia than that of their peers (4).

Likewise, adults with cerebral palsy typically have rates of hypertension and coronary heart disease which mirror or exceed those of the general population.

Generally, adults with intellectual disabilities appear to be at risk for developing hypertension at a rate comparable to that of the general aging population, which increases their risk for heart disease (2).



February 2024

Office of Integrated Health
Supports Network

ABA Snippets ...



Let Them See You Wash Those Hands!

The past two ABA Snippets have highlighted hand washing as a group of behaviors that can be learned and improved. Most of us wash our hands multiple times a day. One way to help teach someone how and when to wash their hands is by washing your hands in front of them. In behavior science this concept is called modeling.

Modeling is showing someone a skill so they can imitate or copy that skill. Modeling has been shown to be effective for many skills, with research dating back to the 1960's (1). Chances are if you are reading this you have a good idea of how modeling works. But have you ever thought about how amazing you could be as a handwashing model?

Think about how many times you wash your hands every day. You could be modeling the steps of how to wash hands correctly for someone that is not fluent. Think of the benefits: clean hands, the risk of spreading infection is reduced, and someone can learn or improve their handwashing skills.

This can be helpful even if you are modeling for someone who already knows how to wash their hands, as you can model situations when one should wash their hands. If you read the last two ABA snippets (include hyperlink here), and the November 2023 OIH Health and Safety Alert on infection control (2), you know we all can improve our handwashing skills.

Create opportunities to model handwashing for others. Remember, practice and feedback increase the success of modeling (1). Next time you sneeze or cough, be a model and draw attention to why you are washing your hands. Pointing out what and why you are modeling a particular behavior will boost the chance of it being imitated (3). You could be a super model with a little practice, so get started today!

You may contact DBHDS to access resources, provide feedback, and learn more about these efforts via the following:
nathan.habel@dbhds.virginia.gov

References

1. Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L. (2020). Imitation, Modeling, and Observational Learning. In J.O. Cooper, T.E. Heron, & W.L. Heward (Eds.). *Applied Behavior Analysis: Third edition*. Pearson Education, Inc., 527-539.
2. Office of Integrated Health Supports The Office of Integrated Health Supports Network. (2023). Infection Control Health & Safety Alert. The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Infection-Control-HS-Alert-with-Quiz-Nov-2023.pdf>
3. Risley, T. R., & Reynolds, N. J. (1970). Emphasis as a prompt for verbal imitation. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 3185-190. Doi: 10.1901/jaba.1970.3-185.

App of the Month



Created by cardiologists, Cardio Visual is a multimedia interactive educational heart health app. Its comprehensive library of curated, shareable informational videos & interactive graphics provides efficient, clear explanations of all aspects of heart health including risk factors, prevention, conditions and treatments of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. (App of the Month is not endorsed by DBHDS OIH. User accepts full responsibility for use).

Educational Resources

- Virginia Department of Health: February is American Heart Month <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-department-of-health-kicks-off-american-heart-month-with-activities-to-promote-heart-health/>
- CDC American Heart Month Toolkits 2023 https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/american_heart_month.htm
- Patient Education Resources for Health Care Professionals <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/patient-education-resources-for-healthcare-providers>
- American Heart Association Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/aha-diet-and-lifestyle-recommendations>
- American Heart Association Recipes <https://recipes.heart.org/en>
- The Heart-Check mark makes it easy to spot heart-healthy foods in the grocery store or when dining out <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/company-collaboration/heart-check-certification>
- What is heart disease and how to help someone in the event of a heart attack or cardiac arrest? <https://theheartfoundation.org/about-heart-disease-2/>



Don't Over "Dose" it this Cold & Flu Season

KnowYourDose.org
Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition

 <p>KITCHEN SPOONS</p> <p>Kitchen spoons come in different sizes! You may give too much or too little medicine.</p>	 <p>DOSING SPOON</p> <p>Double check if there is a decimal point Example: .5 mL versus 5 mL</p>	 <p>MEDICINE CUPS</p> <p>Always pour at eye level, on a flat surface</p>	 <p>ORAL SYRINGES</p> <p>Have your pharmacist or doctor mark the correct line to fill to</p>
--	---	--	--