

# February is American Heart Month



## Plan of the Day Notes

**1 FEB** Heart disease and stroke are the number one killers worldwide. As countries adopt Western style nutrition and become more sedentary, their incidence of cardiovascular disease also increases. Heart disease can be delayed for many decades through healthy lifestyles.

**2 FEB** Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and is a major cause of disability. 26.6 million Americans have been diagnosed with heart disease and almost 770,000 people die of heart disease in the U.S. each year. That is about 32% of all U.S. deaths. Heart disease is a term that includes several more specific heart conditions. The most common heart disease in the United States is coronary heart disease, which can lead to heart attack.

**3 FEB** Know Your Risk! Risk factors for heart disease and stroke include high blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels, smoking, inadequate intake of fruits and vegetables, overweight and obesity and physical inactivity. Taken together, these major risk factors account for around 80% of deaths from heart disease and stroke.

**4 FEB** To estimate your level of risk for CVD, complete the cardiovascular risk assessment at <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/atp/iii/calculator.asp?usertype=profis> to assess your risk having a heart attack or dying within 10 years. Once you know your overall risk, plan with your healthcare professional on taking specific actions to reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke.

**5 FEB** High blood pressure (or hypertension) is the number one risk factor for stroke and a major risk factor for heart disease. It affects nearly one billion people around the world. Each year at least 7.1 million people die as a direct result of high blood pressure. High blood pressure can have no visible symptoms and is called the “silent killer.” The only way to diagnose hypertension is to be checked by your healthcare professional. The good news is that it is easy to detect and usually controllable with lifestyle changes and/or medication.

**8 FEB** Physical inactivity increases the risk of developing heart disease, even in the absence of other risk factors. To promote cardiovascular health, strive to get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week.

**9 FEB** Consumption of at least five servings a day of fruits and vegetables has been shown to produce a 17% reduction in coronary heart disease risk.

**10 FEB** Sodium chloride, or table salt, increases average levels of blood pressure. Some individuals have greater blood pressure responses to salt than others. As part of an overall healthy diet, Americans should consume no more than about 6 grams of salt (sodium chloride) per day.

**11 FEB** Quit smoking—Within two years of quitting, the risk of CVD is substantially reduced, and 15 years after quitting the risk of CVD returns to that of a non-smoker.

**12 FEB** Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans-fat.

**15 FEB** Select fat-free, 1% fat, and low-fat dairy products.

**16 FEB** Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans-fat in your diet.

**17 FEB** Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol. Aim to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.

**18 FEB** Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.

**19 FEB** Choose foods that have no added salt, such as fresh fruits and vegetables versus canned or processed items. Add little or no salt when preparing foods.

**22 FEB** If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. That means no more than one drink per day if you are a woman and two drinks per day if you are a man.

**23 FEB** Choose liquid vegetable oils that are high in unsaturated fats -- like canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, sesame, soybean, and sunflower oils.

**24 FEB** Buy margarine made with unsaturated liquid vegetable oils as the first ingredient. Choose soft tub or liquid margarine or vegetable oil spreads or sprays.

**25 FEB** Check out the American Heart Association recommendation for Dining Out:  
[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/DiningOut/Dining-Out\\_UCM\\_304183\\_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/DiningOut/Dining-Out_UCM_304183_SubHomePage.jsp)

**26 FEB** Take the American Heart Association “Learn to Live” quiz at:  
[http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=american+heart+association+learn+and+live+quiz&gbv=2&oq=american+heart+association+learn&aq=1&aqi=g2g-v8&aql=&gs\\_sm=c&gs\\_upl=11561771810111015132130101161161013441290611.3.7.211310](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=american+heart+association+learn+and+live+quiz&gbv=2&oq=american+heart+association+learn&aq=1&aqi=g2g-v8&aql=&gs_sm=c&gs_upl=11561771810111015132130101161161013441290611.3.7.211310)