



DAVIDSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Protecting, Caring, Serving Our County

Lillian Koontz, MPA, REHS
HEALTH DIRECTOR

Rebecca Daley, RN, MHA
CHAIR, BOARD OF HEALTH

Michael Garrison, MD
MEDICAL DIRECTOR

THE PUBLIC PULSE “Your Health Department Working For You”

Contact: Jen Hames
336-242-2354

Date: February 22, 2018
For Release: Immediately

FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL HEART HEALTH MONTH

February has been designated as American Heart Month in an effort to urge Americans to join the battle against heart disease. Heart disease is a broad term used for a wide variety of diseases of the heart and blood vessels. It is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S. The term heart disease is primarily referring to coronary artery disease, also called coronary heart disease or cardiovascular disease.

Coronary heart disease is a condition in which plaque, which is made up of fat, cholesterol, calcium and other substances in the blood, builds up inside the coronary arteries. Plaque can grow large enough to reduce or completely block the flow of oxygen-rich blood through an artery. When the blockage takes place in a blood vessel that feeds the heart, the result is a heart attack.

Symptoms of a heart attack can vary greatly from person to person, but in order to help you identify a possible heart attack, listed below are some of the most common symptoms:

- Nausea & vomiting - which are sometimes mistaken for food poisoning or the stomach flu
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Shortness of breath, especially in older people
- Feelings of restlessness, sweatiness, anxiety or a sense of impending doom

- Bluishness of the lips, hands or feet
- Heavy pounding of the heart or abnormal heart rhythms
- Loss of consciousness (This can be the first symptom of a heart attack!)
- Disorientation resembling a stroke may occur in older people.

Women may experience different symptoms of a heart attack than men, such as:

- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of the chest. It may last more than a few minutes, or go away and come back.
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea/vomiting or lightheadedness.

Also, older people, especially women, will often take longer to admit they are not well and to request medical assistance.

Although heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S, it is also the most preventable.

Making heart healthy choices regarding diet/exercise, knowing your family's health history, knowing the risk factors, having regular check-ups, and working with your physician to manage your health are all essential aspects of saving lives from this often silent killer. If you are interested in finding out more information about heart disease or would like to get involved with The Heart Foundation please visit www.theheartfoundation.org or you can visit the American Heart Association at www.heart.org.

For more information about health department services, community data, or health status data, contact the Public Information Officer at the Davidson County Health Department at (336) 242-2354.