

Love Your Heart This February

February is American Heart Month, sponsored annually by the American Heart Association to raise awareness of heart disease across the nation. Family history and age are risks that affect the likelihood of the disease, but the good news is that there are some risks of heart disease that can be reduced. Manageable risks that contribute to heart disease include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and smoking. You can reduce your risk by managing your health and making healthy lifestyle changes.

Exercise helps your heart by:

- ❖ Strengthening the heart muscle and cardiovascular system
- ❖ Making the heart more efficient
- ❖ Improving the flow of blood to the heart muscle
- ❖ Improving the heart's ability to handle stress
- ❖ Improving heart failure symptoms

The American Heart Association recommends at least 2 ½ hours of moderate intensity aerobic exercise a week. In addition to aerobic activities, your exercise regimen should include stretching and strengthening activities. Your exercises should be personalized and tailored to your abilities as well as progression of your frequency, duration, and intensity. Live 2 B Healthy® classes help seniors to fulfill this recommendation!



Risk Factors for developing heart disease include:

- **Age.** Aging increases your risk of damaged and narrowed arteries and weakened or thickened heart muscle.
- **Sex.** Men are generally at greater risk of heart disease. However, women's risk increases after menopause.
- **Family history.** A family history of heart disease increases your risk of coronary artery disease, especially if a parent developed it at an early age (before age 55 for a male relative, such as your brother or father, and 65 for a female relative, such as your mother or sister).
- **Smoking.** Nicotine constricts your blood vessels, and carbon monoxide can damage their inner lining, making them more susceptible to atherosclerosis. Heart attacks are more common in smokers than in nonsmokers.
- **Certain chemotherapy drugs and radiation therapy for cancer.** Some chemotherapy drugs and radiation therapies may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- **Poor diet.** A diet that's high in fat, salt, sugar and cholesterol can contribute to the development of heart disease.
- **High blood pressure.** Uncontrolled high blood pressure can result in hardening and thickening of your arteries, narrowing the vessels through which blood flows.
- **High blood cholesterol levels.** High levels of cholesterol in your blood can increase the risk of formation of plaques and atherosclerosis.
- **Diabetes.** Diabetes increases your risk of heart disease. Both conditions share similar risk factors, such as obesity and high blood pressure.
- **Obesity.** Excess weight typically worsens other risk factors.
- **Physical inactivity.** Lack of exercise also is associated with many forms of heart disease and some of its other risk factors, as well.
- **Stress.** Unrelieved stress may damage your arteries and worsen other risk factors for heart disease.
- **Poor hygiene.** Not regularly washing your hands and not establishing other habits that can help prevent viral or bacterial infections can put you at risk of heart infections, especially if you already have an underlying heart condition. Poor dental health also may contribute to heart disease.

More Information: <https://www.mavoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-disease/symptoms-causes/svc-20353118>

To locate FREE local senior fitness classes in your area, please visit:

<https://franchise.live2bhealthy.com/class-schedule/>

Enter your zip code to find locations near you.