



FEBRUARY IS
**AMERICAN
HEART
MONTH**



What is American Heart Month?

February is American Heart Month, a time when all people can focus on and take steps to improve their cardiovascular health. Heart disease is often preventable and controllable. [Knowing the risk factors for heart disease](#) and how to reduce them can help people lead healthier lives and diminish their risk for heart attacks or other cardiovascular diseases. A healthy lifestyle can help keep your blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels normal and lower your risk for heart disease and heart attack.

Choose Heart Healthy Foods and Drinks

Choosing healthy meals and snacks that include plenty of fruits and vegetables, and limiting processed foods and alcohol, can help you reach or maintain a healthy weight and prevent heart disease. As part of the State of Maine Health Plan, members can meet with an [in-network dietitian](#) (unlimited visits) at no cost. Visit the WellStarME Resource Hub for more information about [healthy eating tips](#).

Get Regular Physical Activity

Regular physical activity can help lower your blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugar levels, as well as help you maintain a healthy weight. [According to the CDC](#), people who are overweight or obese are at a higher risk for heart disease, as carrying extra weight can put stress on the heart and blood vessels. 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week is recommended for adults. State of Maine employees who are eligible for State-paid benefits are also eligible for the [Gym Membership Reimbursement Program](#). More information can be found on the [Office of Employee Health & Wellness website](#).

Don't Smoke

Smoking greatly increases the risk of developing heart disease. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk. [The Maine Tobacco HelpLine](#) offers Maine residents the ability to choose from a variety of digital and phone-based programs to meet tobacco users where they are in their quitting process. Additional [Tobacco Cessation Resources](#) can be accessed on the WellStarME Resource Hub.

Know Your Numbers

Monitoring your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels are all important steps in reducing your risk for heart disease. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so checking your blood pressure regularly is important. Members of the State of Maine may have access to home blood pressure monitoring equipment at no cost through the [State of Maine Health Plan](#) or through the [WellStarME blood pressure monitoring program](#). You should have your cholesterol checked at least once every 4 to 6 years and more often if you have been diagnosed with high cholesterol or have a family history of the condition. Learn more about getting a lab test at an [in-network independent lab](#).

Scan the QR code below
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SCAN ME

Did You Know?

As part of your State of Maine benefits, you can reach out to your [Health and Wellness Navigation Team](#), regarding health and wellness questions you may have and to help you achieve your health and wellness goals!