Taking care of the heart

Story by
BETHANN CAMERON
KUSAHC

Heart disease is the single leading cause of death in the United States, causing more than 494,000 deaths in 2004. More than 70 million people have heart disease, a disease of the heart and blood vessels.

The arteries thicken and harden over time with a build up of plaque. Plaque is made from cholesterol and fatty substances which cause the arteries to become clogged and block the blood flow to the heart. That part of the heart dies when blood flow is blocked.

Heart disease is preventable. People can take charge of their health by making positive lifestyle changes to reduce the risk of heart disease.

• Make a yearly date with the doctor. Get blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar checked. Put the date on the calendar as a special date just like birthdays or anniversaries.

• Be physically active daily. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park far away from a destination. Step, march or jog in place for at least 15 minutes while watching television. Exercise at least 30 minutes 5 days a week or more. Walk. Get a step counter and set a goal to walk at least 10,000 steps daily.

• Maintain ideal weight. Being overweight increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. To achieve long term weight loss, don't skip meals but eat 200 to 300 calories less each day. This amounts to one slice of bread, one pat of butter or one-half cup of regular soda. Eat smaller portions. Eat breakfast every day.

• Control high blood pressure. Cut down on salt to help lower high blood pressure. Eat less than 2,000 mg of sodium per day which is one teaspoon of salt. Read food labels. Eat less of food that has sodium in its name such as monosodium glutamate (MSG). Use the DASH diet, Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension, which helps to reduce blood pressure and is low in fat. The DASH eating plan has heart healthy menus and recipes. For more on the DASH eating plan, visit **www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/ hbp/dash**.

• Quit tobacco use. Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood and raises blood pressure. To quit smoking, make a personal quit plan. Pick a quit day. Avoid setting a date close to an activity or a holiday that causes extra stress. Get rid of tobacco in the house, car and workplace. Avoid smoking areas or being around people who smoke. Quitting smoking requires several methods to change personal habits. Here is an example of one quit method:

Day 1 - cut the number of cigarettes smoked by half.

Day 3 - cut the number of cigarettes smoked in half again.

Day 5 - cut smoking in half again. — Quit!

The American Cancer Society has resources and self-help methods available to help quit smoking at **www.acs.org**.

• Cut down on alcohol. Too much alcohol can raise blood pressure, cause heart failure and lead to a stroke. Drink only a moderate amount of alcohol -- an average of one drink for women and two drinks for men per day. One drink is a 12-ounce can of beer or 4 ounces of wine, or 1 1/2 ounces of liquor.

• Manage stress. People can have a healthier heart when they reduce stress. Stress raises blood pressure and can damage the arteries. Use relaxation methods such as deep breathing exercises, counting to 10 and meditation to manage stress. Rest and relax daily.

People can do their part by caring for the heart and making dietary changes, exercising, quitting smoking and managing stress to reduce the risk of heart disease.

Recognizing Children's Dental Month

APG Dental Clinics

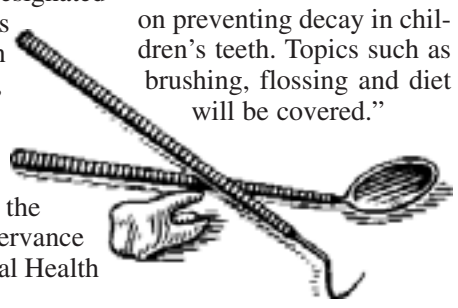
February is National Children's Dental Health month.

"The Aberdeen Proving Ground Dental Clinics are proud to be reaching out to our Soldiers' children," said Lt. Col. Colleen C. Shull, commander, APG Dental Clinic Command.

The theme for this year's campaign is "A Healthy Smile is Always in Style!"

"Attitudes and habits established at an early age are critical in maintaining good oral health throughout life," Shull said.

National Children's Dental Health Month began as a one-day event in Cleveland, Ohio, on Feb. 3, 1941. During that year Feb. 3 through 7 was designated as Children's Dental Health Week in Akron, Ohio.



The American Dental Association held the first national observance of Children's Dental Health Day on Feb. 8, 1949. The single day observance became a weeklong event in 1955, and in 1981, the program was extended to a month-long celebration known today as National Children's Dental Health Month.

Since 1941, the observance has grown from a two-city event into a nationwide program. NCDHM messages reach millions of people in communities across the country and at numerous armed service bases.

"Each week in February, *APG News* will feature an article concerning children's dental health," Shull said. "It is this command's hope that parents will use this valuable information on preventing decay in children's teeth. Topics such as brushing, flossing and diet will be covered."

Leave Donation

To participate in the Voluntary Leave Program, use forms OPM 630, Application to Become a Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program; OPF 630-A, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (within agency); and OPM 630-B, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (outside agency).

For more information, call Ronda McKinney, 410-278-8988, or e-mail rondamckinney@usag.apg.army.mil.

Employees eligible for donations in the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program

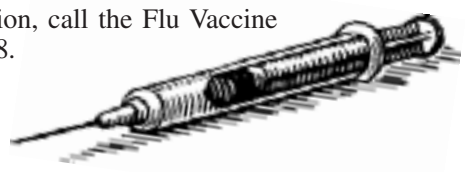
Michele Amrhein
Sarah Blevins
Jeanie Bowman
Robert Brown
Andrew Buchanan
Leroy Carter
Barbara Cascio
Barbara Crossley
Sharon Daemer
Lola Daniels
Shelia Davison (benign paroxysmal positional vertigo)
Geraldine Eaton
Gregory Fox
Renee Gaffney
Patricia Gibson
Kay Gilbert
Susan Gorhan
Shirley Gross
Melanie A. Hoffman (parasinusitis, fibromyalgia condition)
Lydia Langley
Robyn Lee
Michael Lewis
Wayne Kaiser
Beverly King (caring for husband)
Priscilla Kelly
William B. McLean (kidney failure)
Sandra Miller
Patricia Milwicz
Mary Pettiway
Tess Ramos (total hip replacement)
William Sebra
Barbara Seker
Cynthia Shelton
Linda Shoaf
Tomika Silver
Alison Tichenor
Gary Tudor (heart valve replacement)
Jerry Williams
Billie Wooten
Gerard Yursis

KUSAHC Shots

Flu shots now available for DA civilians

Influenza vaccination is now available for Department of the Army civilians. Civilians can get immunized at the Aberdeen Occupational Health Clinic, 1:30 to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Flu shots are voluntary and administered without charge.

For mission and staffing reasons, this service is not available at the Edgewood Health Clinic.

For more information, call the Flu Vaccine Hotline, 410-306-3588.