

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

• FEBRUARY •



This February we are celebrating American Heart Month. **Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), commonly referred to as heart disease, is the number one cause of death in the United States for both men and women.** Heart disease can lead to other serious conditions such as angina (chest pains caused by reduced blood flow to the heart), heart attacks, and heart failure. The primary cause of heart disease is atherosclerosis, which is the buildup of plaque in the inner walls of your arteries. Plaque can be made up of blood platelets, cholesterol, fibrous tissue, and calcium. As plaque continues to build over time in your arteries, it slows or blocks blood flow to your heart.

Signs & Symptoms

- Pain or discomfort in your chest
- Shortness of breath
- Jaw and neck aches
- Swelling in your lower extremities

Risk Factors you CAN'T control:

- Personal history of a heart attack or stroke
- Female (55 years or older)
- Male (45 years or older)
- Family history of heart disease

Risk Factors you CAN control:

- Lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy diet
- Smoking
- Stress
- High blood pressure

Remember!

If you are enrolled in Air Group's medical plans, in-network preventive care is covered at 100%. This includes your annual physical and routine bloodwork, which may help detect early signs of heart disease.

Important note: Preventive exams are covered once every 12 months. For example, if you have your annual physical on February 1, 2026, you will be eligible for your next physical covered at 100% on February 1, 2027.

Heart Health Tips

- **Get regular checkups:** Have your blood pressure checked at every visit (or at least every 1-2 years) and your cholesterol tested every 4-6 years, or yearly if you have heart disease, diabetes, or other risk factors. A simple blood test, called a "lipid profile," can measure your cholesterol levels. Please consult your doctor to determine if this test is appropriate for you.
- **Don't smoke:** If you smoke, quitting is one of the best things you can do for your heart. Click [HERE](#) to visit the American Cancer Society's free smoking cessation program, Empowered to Quit.
- **Maintain a healthy weight & stay active:** Achieve or maintain a healthy body weight and engage in regular physical activity.
- **Take medications as prescribed:** Follow your doctor's instructions, including asking whether daily low-dose aspirin is appropriate for you.
- **Manage diabetes:** If you have diabetes, stick to your treatment plan. If not, learn about prevention and detection at diabetes.org.
- **Eat a heart-healthy diet:** Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, lentils, and healthy fats such as (olive oil and avocados), while limiting saturated fats found in fatty meats, high-fat dairy products, and desserts.
- **Other Tips:** Manage stress, get quality sleep, and drink alcohol in moderation (if at all). A strong support system helps lower stress and keeps your heart healthy.

For more information on cholesterol and heart health, visit nhlbi.nih.gov/health/blood-cholesterol.

Sources:

- <https://healthylearn.com/connerstrong/hc/heart-health.html>
- <https://healthylearn.com/connerstrong/hc/cholesterol-health.html>
- <https://healthylearn.com/connerstrong/hc/love-your-heart.html>

Please note: This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult your healthcare provider for medical concerns. Please refer to your plan documents for specific benefit details and limitations.