

# February is Heart Healthy Month

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JASPER SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Learning the ABCS of Heart Health

### Learn your ABCS

#### A– Aspirin

#### B– Blood Pressure

#### C– Cholesterol

#### S– STOP ALL TOBACCO

We should try to start with the ABCS understanding that all parts may not fit you, but it is a good pattern to start with. Aspirin, talk to your doctor about an aspirin regimen, it is beneficial in preventing clots which can block arteries. Blood Pressure, high blood pressure can be associated with coronary artery disease (CAD). A normal blood pressure reading is 120/80mmHg or lower. High blood pressure is generally considered to be a blood pressure reading greater than or equal to 140mmHg (systolic or top number) or greater than 90mmHg (diastolic or bottom number). Increased blood pressure is to be taken seriously! They don't call it "The Silent Killer" for nothing.

So get yours checked, your school nurse can help. Cholesterol is sometimes the bad guy. Low-density lipoproteins (LDL) cholesterol is the "bad" cholesterol responsible for many heart problems. Triglycerides are another type of fat molecule that can be bad for the heart. Genetics can be a cause of these two bad guys being elevated. There is help available to bring them down no matter what the cause. The most important part is QUITTING TOBACCO USE!! Yes, I know it is hard, I really do! But it is the best gift you can give yourself and your family. This means all tobacco use, smokeless included. They all produce the same reaction and that is constricting arteries. Not

to mention they all cause cancer, but that is another newsletter. Try to quit, you won't get it done until you try and you won't regret success! Pick a date and go for it. Look to friends and family for support. And remember you can quit when you want or you can wait and let a respirator come between you and your tobacco. Eating and living healthy can be fun. It is not really true that if it tastes good spit it out. Cooking and eating healthy can be fun especially if you get to share it with friends. Exercising can really be fun, try getting a partner to help keep you motivated. Try hiking, there are several trails in our area with different degrees of difficulty.

## Symptoms of Coronary Artery Disease

Common symptoms of coronary artery disease include angina, shortness of breath (particularly during physical exertion), and rapid heart beat. Sometimes people with CAD have few or no symptoms until they have a heart attack or heart failure.

Treatment is usually lifestyle changes (such as dieting, exercising, and quitting tobacco) are the first approach for treating all degrees of coronary artery disease. Depending on severity and individual conditions, patients may also need on or more medications, surgery, or both.

Prevention is the best way to go. Know your risk of heart disease and then do what you can to prevent it. Take a look at these things, Genetics (family history of early heart problems) you can't change this but the next things can help decrease your risk. Know your numbers (your blood pressure, BMI, and your Cholesterol). We have already covered blood pressure and cholesterol, many people don't know that a BMI of 25 or less is ideal for heart health. Please remember that this is just a suggested number and we are not all going to fall in that range, however being physically active and keeping extra weight off of the midsection is going to be the most helpful in heart health.

Pay attention to your body. It is the only one you are going to get, here anyway. Don't ignore symptoms. It is time to call 911 if Chest, neck, shoulder or arm pain is present and last more than a few minutes, shortness of breath, unconsciousness occurs. Know CPR (the life you save may be someone you love) and know where your defibrillators are on your campus, they save lives!