

**PSA**

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Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death for both men and women alike in the United States. As such, February is recognized as the American Heart Month.

According to The Heart Foundation, someone suffers a heart attack in the United States every 34 seconds ([www.heartfoundation.org](http://www.heartfoundation.org)). Of the 720,000 heart attacks each year, nearly 205,000 individuals are repeat patients, while 515,000 are first-time victims.

Understanding the severity and frequency of heart disease, raising awareness and prevention has become a national initiative. One such initiative is Million Hearts, whose goal is to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017, with an even greater impact over time ([millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov)).

While not all heart disease is preventable, measures can be taken to decrease the risk and educate individuals about the causes and symptoms of heart disease. Therefore, Santa Rosa County Emergency Management and Lifeguard Ambulance Service are joining together to do their part in raising awareness to the local community.

**Prevent/Decrease Risk of Heart Disease:**

- Lower blood pressure and cholesterol
- Monitor sodium and fat intake
- Be physically active
- See a primary care physician for routine follow-up
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet
- Quit smoking or do not start smoking
- Know/understand possible symptoms
- Be aware of family's medical history

**Be Aware of Higher Risk Factors:**

- High blood pressure
- High LDL cholesterol
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Poor Diet
- Overweight and obesity
- Physical Inactivity
- Excessive alcohol use
- Hereditary

**Understand Potential Symptoms:**

Some symptoms are listed below, although this **does not** encompass the full list of potential cardiovascular symptoms.

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Numbness/pain in arms
- Heartburn
- Lightheadedness
- Fatigue
- Rapid or irregular pulse
- Nausea
- Cold sweat
- Pain in neck, jaw, throat, back or upper abdomen

*It is important to remember that all cardiovascular events, including strokes and heart attacks, do not present the same symptoms for all individuals and vary between males and females. Furthermore, some symptoms are persistent but may not seem related to cardiovascular concerns.*

***If your health changes, contact your physician to discuss your issues and concerns. However, if you think you are experiencing a cardiovascular emergency, such as a heart attack or stroke, contact 9-1-1 immediately.***