

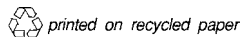


For more information, contact:



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301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-5026
1-800-745-9311
<http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/diabetes>

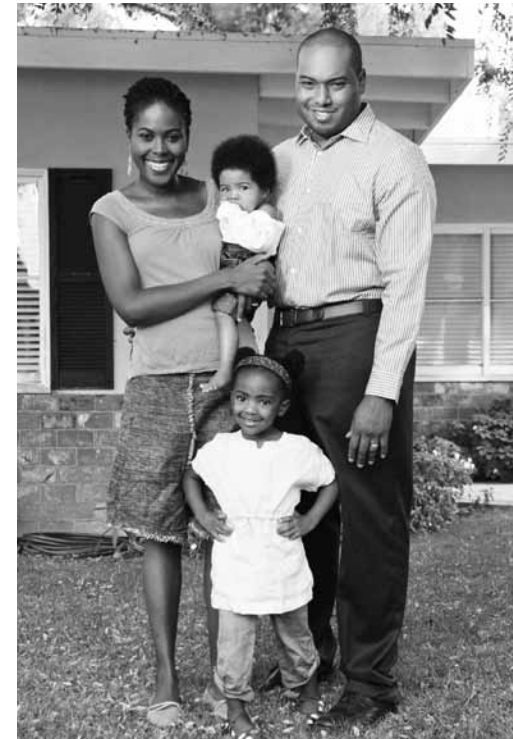
Funded from a grant by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
#U58DP001978-01



DPC-PAM-8 (99249) 4/10
(Previous version 11/02 should NOT be used)

"Take Heart"

**For a Healthy
African American's Life**



Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

In traditional African society, men and women were very active. They ran, walked, and danced.

Lack of physical activity can contribute to high cholesterol, weight gain and your risk for developing heart disease and diabetes.

Obesity rates in the United States have more than doubled in the past three decades. Studies show that 77 percent of non-Hispanic black women and 63 percent of non-Hispanic black men who are 20 or older are overweight or obese.

If you have too much fat, especially in your waist area, you are at a higher the risk for heart disease and stroke.

Combined with healthy eating, regular physical activity can keep your weight under control, improve blood cholesterol levels and prevent and manage high blood pressure.

For a Healthy African American's Life -

- Honor your heritage. Keep physically active every day.
- Get moving - take the stairs, walk at lunch or breaks.
- Pick a physical activity that you like, and stick to it.
- All activity is good. Even doing gardening, housework or dancing can improve your health.
- Try to get 30 minutes of physical activity five or more times a week.
- Walking is one of the best forms of physical activity for almost everyone.
- Find ways for your family to be active - take a hike, go to the zoo, or play soccer or softball together.



“Take Heart”

Physical Activity

Tobacco

Cholesterol

Blood Pressure

Diabetes

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Anyone can develop high blood pressure, also called hypertension. High blood pressure tends to be more common, happens at an earlier age, and is more severe for African Americans than any other race or ethnic group.

African-American men in their twenties are 10 times more likely than white men to develop kidney failure due to high blood pressure.

Blood pressure is the force of the blood leaving the heart. There are actually two pressures in the blood vessels. The higher blood pressure number is when the heart is contracting; the lower blood pressure number is when the heart has relaxed. Too much force or high blood pressure on the blood vessels can damage them. Those mostly affected are blood vessels in the eyes, kidneys, heart and brain, which can lead to heart disease, as well as kidney disease and stroke.

The good news is that high blood pressure can be controlled - and better yet, it can be prevented.

For a Healthy African American's Life -

- Increase your physical activity.
- Stay at a healthy weight or lose weight if you are overweight.
- Use less salt and fewer processed or convenience foods.
- Reduce stress.
- Quit smoking.
- If you have high blood pressure, take your medication.
- Use less or stop drinking alcohol.
- Know your blood pressure number. Your blood pressure should be under 130/80.
- Have your blood pressure checked at every doctor visit.
- Talk with your doctor and ask questions about how best to lower blood pressure.

DIABETES

3.7 million or 14.7% of African Americans age 20 and older have diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes.

African Americans are 1.8 times more likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites.

African Americans have higher rates of blindness, amputations and kidney failure that result from diabetes.

Diabetes accelerates blood vessel damage that contributes to heart disease.

Heart disease and stroke are the leading cause of death among persons with diabetes and account for 33 percent of all deaths among African Americans.

The risk for death from heart disease is two to four times greater for a person with diabetes than for a person without.

For a Healthy African American's Life -

To prevent diabetes:

- Be physically active or be more active.
- Stay at a healthy body weight, or if overweight, lose weight.
- If there is diabetes in your family, have your blood glucose checked yearly.

If you have diabetes:

- Plan your meals, make healthier food choices and limit the amount of calories and fat in your diet.
- Take your medications for good blood glucose control.
- Stay at a healthy body weight, or if you are overweight, lose weight.
- Check your blood sugar often and keep your blood glucose as close to normal as possible.
- Do not smoke.
- Be physically active or be more active.

TOBACCO

Tobacco is the only consumer product that, when used as directed, causes death, disease, disability. Smoking doubles your risk of heart attack, stroke, and increases your risk of sudden cardiac death 2 – 4 times.

African Americans continue to suffer more from chronic and preventable disease than white Americans.

Of the three leading causes of death in African Americans -- heart disease, cancer, and stroke -- smoking and other tobacco use are major contributors to these illnesses. Each year approximately 45,000 African Americans die from a preventable smoking-related disease.

21.5 percent of African American's smoke.

For a Healthy African American's Life -

DO NOT start smoking. If you have started smoking, then quit:

- List your reasons for quitting, and place the list where you can see it often.
- Set your quit date.
- Get prepared. Think of habits or routines to change. Throw away tobacco-use material. For your weaker moments, buy raw vegetables or other healthy snacks.
- Get help. Your doctor can provide helpful ways to quit. Choose a method that you think will work best for you.
- Make a plan. Think about how you will handle weaker moments.
- Plan for uneasy times. Plan for how you will handle others smoking around you.
- Get support. Ask for support from your partner, family and friends.
- Reward yourself. Decide how you will spend all the money you save once you quit.

Nebraska Tobacco Quitline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW

CHOLESTEROL

African Americans have the same problems with high levels of cholesterol in their blood as everybody else.

With high cholesterol, fat can build up inside a blood vessel. The higher the cholesterol is in the blood, the more it builds up in the blood vessels. This makes the openings in the blood vessels get smaller. If the openings become too small, not enough blood gets through. Blood vessels can become so narrow that they can cut off blood flow and increase your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Your genetics influence how your food is metabolized and how much cholesterol your body produces and what your ratio of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) to high-density lipoprotein (HDL) is.

Men over age 35 and women over age 45 should have cholesterol checks every five years if they do not have an increased risk of heart disease and high cholesterol. If an individual does have an increased risk, annual screenings are recommended.

For a Healthy African American's Life –

- Be more physically active.
- Eat lean meats such as game or fish.
- Eat food high in fiber, more whole grains.
- Eat less of foods high in fat and cholesterol such as fried foods, butter or creamy foods.
- Eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Stay at a healthy weight or lose weight if you are overweight.
- Read food labels.
- Have your cholesterol number checked.
- If your cholesterol number is above 200 you are at risk for heart disease.
- Choose 1% or skim milk and low-fat dairy products.

