



American Heart Month

We often associate the month of February with hearts because of Valentine's Day. However, there's another reason we should think about hearts in February: it's American Heart Month. February is designated as American Heart Month to advocate cardiovascular health and raise awareness about heart disease.

This is the perfect time to learn more about your heart, how to take care of it and how to detect signals of cardiovascular disease. One of the main goals of American Heart Month is to help us learn to fully embrace heart health.

The first step to achieving better heart health is learning what heart disease is. The phrases "heart disease" and "cardiovascular disease" are used interchangeably to describe the various conditions that affect your heart. Heart or cardiovascular diseases include blood vessel

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diseases, heart rhythm problems, and congenital heart defects.

Every year, one in four people will die from heart disease. Heart disease can strike anyone, but certain individuals may be more at risk. Some of the most common risk factors for heart disease include:

- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Poor Diet
- Inactive Lifestyle
- Smoking
- Excessive Alcohol

The belief that cardiovascular disease inevitably happens as we age is a misconception. There are many things we can do to strengthen the heart and circulatory system at any age.



Making small changes can have a big impact. Heart health can increase with even a small amount of physical activity.

Start slow, and try moving a little more each week. Replace processed foods, high in saturated fat and salt, with more fresh fruits and vegetables. Activities and nutrition are things we can take charge of immediately and with no assistance.

Healthcare is another important factor in cardiovascular health. If your physician has prescribed medication for diabetes, high blood pressure or other conditions, make sure to follow instructions, and do not skip doses. Watch your numbers when it comes to blood sugar and blood pressure. Report any changes to your physician.

Maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding excessive alcohol and quitting smoking are also ways you can work towards a healthier heart.

Aging Best offers workshops that can help you begin your journey. The guidance and support you will receive can help you achieve your overall health goals. You will learn ways to gain control of and better manage your chronic conditions. Making healthier choices and improving your cardiovascular system can begin at any time. How about now?

If you would like to sign up for or learn more about the different types of healthy living workshops Aging Best has available, please call 573-540-1100 or email mmckeage@agingbest.org.

Mid-MO Self-Measured Blood Pressure Program



Catholic Charities and Aging best have partnered for a great new opportunity. The Self-Measured Blood Pressure Program will serve residents of Boone and Cole counties with possible expansion to additional counties.

The program offers participants the use of a blood pressure monitor along with the support and health and nutrition education to set and achieve their health goals.

Participants will meet with a facilitator and be shown how to use a blood pressure monitor. They will then be provided one to record their blood pressure at home along with instructions on how to recognize triggers that affect their readings.

Participants will visit with their facilitator twice a month, checking in by phone, email or text. They will also attend monthly nutrition education classes to learn how diet impacts our blood pressure.

There are a few eligibility guidelines to participate in the program. Interested individuals must be:

- 18 years of age or older.
- Have been told by their doctor that they have high blood pressure (hypertension) or they are on hypertensive medications.
- Have not had a recent stroke, heart attack, or heart problem that required a hospital or doctor's office visit in the last 12 months.
- Do not have irregular heart beats (arrhythmia), or heart flutter (atrial fibrillation or "a-fib").
- Do not have swelling from a lymph node removal (lymphedema) and are not at risk for lymphedema.

If you are interested in learning to accurately check your blood pressure at home for overall health improvement, this may be the perfect program for you. Participants must be willing to commit to the program requirements, including attending the educational seminars.

For more information Boone County residents may call 573-489-3260 or email mschulte@agingbest.org. Cole County residents may call 573-635-7719 or email jmutamba@cccnmo.org.

South Central Pension Rights Project

The South Central Pension Rights Project helps individuals understand and exercise their pension rights. The organization provides free-of-charge services to workers or retirees and their family members who currently live or work in Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

Free-of-charge services are provided regardless of age, income, or the amount of benefit sought. Attorneys and paralegals provide services by mail, phone or email at:

South Central
Pension Rights Project
1920 E. Riverside Drive
Suite A-120, #501
Austin, TX 78741
800-443-2528

www.southcentralpension.org

Ombudsman Program Seeks Volunteers

The Ombudsman program has seen a decrease in volunteers during the recent pandemic. The team is focusing heavily on volunteer recruitment. "We would like to have at least one volunteer in every skilled nursing facility within our 19-county service area," said Ronda Giger,

Regional Ombudsman Program Director. "It's a big goal, but we are confident we can do it. At present, we have counties that have never had an Ombudsman volunteer. We want to see that change."

The team plans to raise more awareness by offering more in-person presentations to groups and organizations in each county. The program is seeing the largest need in Audrain, Camden, Callaway, Cooper, Howard, Laclede, Phelps and Washington counties.

For more information on becoming an Ombudsman volunteer or hosting a presentation in your area call or email Ronda Giger at 800-369-5211 or rgiger@agingbest.org.

Resources and Assistance

Members of Aging Best's Community Options & Services team are aware of the many types of resources and assistance programs available to older adults. Navigating the application process can sometimes be challenging. Having guidance from someone with knowledge of the available programs and the eligibility guidelines for each can often have a big impact on your savings.

If you would like more information about programs you may qualify for, please contact Aging Best at 800-369-5211 or email help4u@agingbest.org.