

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE:

Contact: Vivian R. Frudakis 1-517-279-9561 ext 123

February is Heart Month

Do You Know The Basics For Preventing Heart Disease, Stroke & Heart Attack?

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular diseases, including stroke, are the leading cause of death in Michigan. In 2004 Statewide, they caused 30, 086 deaths (35.3% of all deaths). Locally during the same year, cardiovascular disease (including stroke) caused 29.8% of deaths in Branch County, 37.9% of deaths in Hillsdale County and 38.4% of deaths in St. Joseph County.

How can YOU prevent heart disease, stroke and heart attacks?

- **Stop Smoking-** If you smoke, quit. If someone in your household smokes, encourage them to quit. We know it's tough. But it's tougher to recover from a heart attack or stroke or to live with chronic heart disease.
- **Reduce Blood Cholesterol-** Fat lodged in your arteries is a disaster waiting to happen. You've got to reduce your intake of saturated and trans fat and *get moving*.
- **Lower High Blood Pressure-** It's the single largest risk factor for stroke. Stroke is the #3 killer and one of the leading causes of disability in the United States. Shake that salt habit, take any medication the doctor recommends *exactly* as prescribed and, once again....*get moving*.
- **Be Physically Active Every Day-** Research has shown that getting 30-60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week can help lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and keep your weight at a healthy level. But something IS better than nothing. If you're doing nothing now, start out slow. Studies show that people who have achieved even a moderate level of fitness are much less likely to die early than those with a low fitness level.
- **Aim For A Healthy Weight-**Obesity places you at risk for high cholesterol, high blood pressure and insulin resistance, a precursor of type 2 diabetes-the very factors that heighten your risk of cardiovascular disease.
- **Manage Diabetes-** People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to develop cardiovascular disease due to a variety of risk factors, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, smoking, obesity and lack of physical activity.
- **Reduce Stress-** Some scientists have noted a relationship between coronary heart disease risk and stress in a person's life that may affect the risk factors for heart disease and stroke.
- **Limit Alcohol-** Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure, cause heart failure and lead to stroke.

For more information, contact the American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org or the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency at 517-279-9561 ext 123 or 144.