

# HealthBreak

FEBRUARY 2012

## American Heart Month

### AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Did you know that heart disease, including stroke, is the number one cause of death for men and women in the United States? In fact, about 630,000 Americans die from this disease each year. February is American Heart Month, so take heart and learn the facts about heart disease and what you can do to prevent it.

### ARE YOU AT RISK?

Your risk of heart disease is affected by many factors, some you can control and others you can't. Understanding the most common risk factors is the key to determining which behaviors, if any, you need to change in order to improve your overall heart health. There are some risk -factors that you have no control over, such as age, pre-existing conditions, genetics and race/ethnicity. Simply having one or two of these risk factors doesn't automatically mean that heart disease is in your future. That is why it's so important to take charge and improve the risk factors you can control, including the following:

- Obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Tobacco use
- Stress
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure

### PREVENTING HEART DISEASE WITH A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

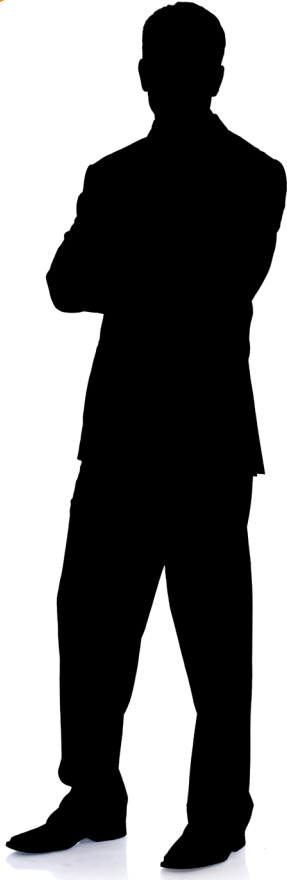
Committing to a heart-healthy lifestyle is the best way to take control of your heart health and improve, or even eliminate, many risk factors. It is your best defense against heart disease, and it's also your responsibility. A heart-healthy lifestyle includes these important actions:

**Avoiding Tobacco:** If you smoke, quitting is very important. Quitting is tough, but continuing to smoke has serious consequences. Smoking damages your lungs, arteries and heart. It can lead to heart disease, heart attack, stroke and cancer.

**Being Active:** Getting a minimum of 30 minutes of exercise at least five days a week has been shown to help reduce stress, lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and keep you at a healthy weight.

**Eating Well:** A heart-healthy diet is one of your greatest weapons against heart disease. The type and amount of food you eat can affect several controllable risk factors, including obesity, blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes.

# SuccessStories



I was a smoker for nearly 20 years and, like so many others, I had tried and failed to quit so many times I lost count. Earlier this year I decided to give it another shot. I heard about this coaching program, so I figured “why not.” I am so glad I did!

My Health Coach was so helpful and actually encouraged me to not quit right away. In the past I would just jump right in and go for it. Instead I set a quit date, and for the next three weeks I prepared for that day. Using my Coach’s advice I decided to use

“My coach was so helpful and actually encouraged me to not quit tight away.”

— JASON

NRT gum. I used it for four weeks to help with the cravings and relied on my family and Coach for support and motivation. I am happy to report that I am officially tobacco-free and have been for nearly six months. I can’t thank you enough. I am proud to call myself a quitter!

## COACH HIGHLIGHT

Growing up, I was always an active child. Instead of staying inside and playing dolls, I was outside playing in the yard with neighbors or looking for the next trail to blaze through the woods. This is something that has carried over into adulthood and what makes me passionate as a Health Coach - to promote activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

My goal, as a coach, is to have an impact on at least one person each day. If this is accomplished, then it means I have made a difference in at least 250 people’s lives each year. That’s a wonderful feeling!

— MARGARET

