

## Community Health Coalition, Inc.

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### **Heart Disease**



**Dr. Kevin L. Thomas**

Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States. For the African-American community, heart disease takes an even greater toll, more so than any other racial and ethnic group. The death rate from cardiovascular diseases for Americans has declined by 20 percent in recent years, however the decrease has been much less for African Americans.

Kevin L. Thomas, MD, F.A.C.C., Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease at Duke University Medical Center states, ***“ARM YOURSELF WITH KNOWLEDGE TO EMPOWER YOU TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH!!!!!!!!!!”***

#### **Risk factors that we can target to reduce heart disease include:**

- ***High blood pressure: goal systolic or top number <140 diastolic or bottom number <90***
- ***High cholesterol: goal total <200 LDL or bad cholesterol <100 good cholesterol or HDL >50***
- ***Diabetes: fasting (8 hours without eating) blood sugar <126 Hemoglobin A1C <7.0***
- ***Tobacco use: stop immediately or develop a plan to stop pick a significant date to stop birthday, anniversary or Christmas, pray for strength to stop.***
- ***Obesity- body mass index- <26***
- ***Physical inactivity-work hard to be more active, swim, park at the other end of the parking lot to walk further, use the mall for inclement weather, take the steps***
- ***Stress- try yoga, found an outlet exercise, music, meditation.***

#### **Change your lifestyle**

- Exercise for 30 minutes a day at least 5 days a week
- Eat fast food no more than twice a month. Order salads.
- Eat out less than twice per month
- Count calories (<2200 per day)
- Limit sodium (salt) intake (< 4grams per day) Less than 2grams if you have heart disease or high BP

#### **Be Prepared. Ask your doctor questions about your health.**

- What tests should I have, and how often, to monitor my risk factors for developing heart disease and stroke?
- What do my test results mean? Do I have heart disease?
- What sort of treatment plan do you recommend? Can you help me plan a safe exercise program?
- What are the possible side effects of medications I've been prescribed?
- Purchase a blood pressure cuff and check regularly OMRON is a good brand.

## **Salt and sodium: The facts**

Salt adds flavor to food and is also used as a preservative, binder, and stabilizer. The human body needs a very small amount of sodium – the primary element we get from salt – to conduct nerve impulses, contract and relax muscles, and maintain the proper balance of water and minerals. But too much sodium in the diet can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. Most Americans consume at least 1.5 teaspoons of salt per day, which contains far more sodium than our bodies need.

## **Know your limits**

I love you, salt,  
but you're  
breaking my  
heart.

**Take the Pledge**

The government recommends limiting daily sodium intake to one 2,300 milligrams (one teaspoon). The American Heart Association recommends that the following at-risk individuals should limit their daily sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams (2/3 of a teaspoon):

- People over age 50
- People who have high or slightly elevated blood pressure
- People who have diabetes
- African Americans

Given that the majority of US adults are at risk of developing health problems related to salt consumption, nutrition experts at Harvard School of Public Health, the American Heart Association, and the Center for Science in the Public Interest have called for the U.S. government to lower the upper limit of daily recommended sodium intake from 2,300 milligrams to 1,500 milligrams per day (2/3 teaspoon of salt).

***TAKE THE PLEDGE AND REDUCE YOUR SALT INTAKE. CALL COMMUNITY HEALTH COALITION AT 919-470-8681***



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Thank you.

**Health Tip is a message from Community Health Coalition, Inc.** and is written in partnership with Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, NC Mutual Life Insurance Company and Duke Regional Hospital.

***REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!***