



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Heart Health

American Heart Month – February 2014

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

One in three deaths in the U.S. is caused by cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure; it's the leading cause of death.

Dr. Fleetwood Loustalot is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. He's joining us today to discuss ways to prevent cardiovascular disease. Welcome to the show, Fleetwood.

[Dr. Loustalot] Nice to be with you today, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Fleetwood, what makes a person more likely to get cardiovascular disease?

[Dr. Loustalot] Well, the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease are well known and most are preventable or able to be controlled. Leading risk factors include high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, being overweight or obese, smoking, lack of physical activity, and an unhealthy diet, including consuming too much sodium in your diet. And many of these risk factors can start having negative consequences even in childhood.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are certain sex or age groups more susceptible to heart problems?

[Dr. Loustalot] Yes. Unfortunately, simply getting older is a risk factor for heart disease, and the majority of deaths from heart disease are among those age 65 and over. While heart disease is the leading cause of death in men *and* women in the U.S., there is a difference in risk with men having a higher risk at a younger age, but that difference mostly balances out after menopause.

[Dr. Gaynes] How important is a family history of heart disease?

[Dr. Loustalot] Bob, I would say it's one piece of the puzzle but a smaller piece, in most cases. It's also related to your first degree relatives. So if your father or brother had a heart attack or stroke before age 55, or your mother or sister before age 65, you are at increased risk.

[Dr. Gaynes] Fleetwood, what lifestyle changes can people make to help prevent cardiovascular disease?

[Dr. Loustalot] There are many things that people can do to prevent heart disease, such as eating a healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and diets low in saturated fats and cholesterol, and those low in sodium. We should exercise regularly. The goal for

everybody is at least 150 minutes a week of physical activity, but some activity is better than none, Bob. Walking is the most common form of physical activity, and regular walking with others may improve your chances of continuing. And eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly will help you maintain and sustain a healthy weight. And don't smoke. If you currently smoke, quit. It takes most persons multiple times to stop smoking. Seeking counseling or using medications, such as nicotine replacement, can help increase your chances of stopping smoking. And lastly, if you choose to drink, limit your alcohol intake. Current recommendations are for no more than one drink a day for women and no more than two drinks a day for men.

[Dr. Gaynes] Fleetwood, what else can people do?

[Dr. Loustalot] Well there are certain factors called the ABCS that can be focused on to improve your cardiovascular health, and those are using aspirin for prevention of heart disease, controlling your blood pressure, managing cholesterol, and stopping smoking.

[Dr. Gaynes] Fleetwood, where can listeners get more information about preventing cardiovascular disease?

[Dr. Loustalot] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/heartdisease.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Fleetwood. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Fleetwood Loustalot about ways to prevent cardiovascular disease.

Remember, to reduce *your* risk, follow the ABCS. Take aspirin as directed by your health care provider, control high blood pressure, manage cholesterol, and don't smoke. You should also eat a diet that includes plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, exercise regularly, and maintain a healthy weight.

Until next time, be well. This is your host Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.