



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Cardio Health

CDC Grand Rounds: The Million Hearts Initiative

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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.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Each year, more than two million people suffer a heart attack or stroke and over 800,000 die from these conditions.

Dr. Amy Valderrama is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Welcome to the show, Amy.

[Dr. Valderrama] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Amy, what are the leading causes of cardiovascular disease?

[Dr. Valderrama] Well first, let me start by telling you what cardiovascular disease is. It's a group of disorders of the heart and blood vessels that includes heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes. And there are a number of things that can increase your chances of having cardiovascular disease. There are some that you can do something about and some that you can't. The things that you can't change would be having a family history of cardiovascular disease; this can put you at an increased risk. Things that you *can* change would be high cholesterol; high blood pressure; diabetes; smoking; eating a diet that's high in saturated fats, cholesterol, and sodium; being physically inactive; and being overweight or obese.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the best ways for someone to identify their own risk factors?

[Dr. Valderrama] Check-ups are very important for knowing if you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure. Your health care provider should check your cholesterol levels at least once every five years. Get your blood pressure checked at least every two years if your blood pressure is normal and more often if it's elevated. And you can monitor your own blood pressure by checking it at home with a home blood pressure monitor or at a grocery store or pharmacy kiosk.

[Dr. Gaynes] Aside from controlling high blood pressure and high cholesterol, what are some other ways we can decrease our chance of having a heart attack or stroke?

[Dr. Valderrama] Eat a healthy diet that's low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium and high in fiber and fresh fruits and vegetables; maintain a healthy weight; exercise regularly (physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight); don't smoke; and limit your alcohol use. And remember, if you're taking medication for high cholesterol or high blood pressure, to follow your health care provider's instructions.

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

[Dr. Valderrama] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/heart.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Amy. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Amy Valderrama about cardiovascular disease.

You can cut your risk of dying from a heart attack or stroke in half with a healthy diet, physical activity, regular checkups, and treatment, when needed.

Until next time, be well. This is 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.