February is Heart Health Month

About heart disease:

Heart disease or coronary artery disease, is a condition in which plaque, made up of fat, cholesterol, calcium and other substances in the blood, builds up inside the coronary arteries which supply oxygen-rich blood to the heart muscle. Plaque can grow large enough to reduce or completely block blood flow through an artery. More frequently, a plaque may rupture, causing a blood clot to form that either blocks the artery or breaks off and travels somewhere else in the body causing a blockage at another site. When the blockage takes place in a blood vessel that feeds the heart, the result is a heart attack or, depending on the severity, Sudden Cardiac Death.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. The good news? It is also one of the most preventable. Making heart-healthy choices, knowing your family health history and the risk factors for heart disease, having regular check-ups and working with your physician to manage your health are all integral aspects of saving lives from this often silent killer.

Preventing heart disease:

By living a healthy lifestyle, you can help keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, and sugar normal and lower your risk for heart disease and heart attack. A healthy lifestyle includes the following:

- Eating a healthy diet.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Getting enough physical activity.
- Not smoking or using other forms of tobacco.
- Limiting alcohol use.

Sources: cdc.gov/heartdisease
theheartfoundation.org/heart-disease-facts

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