

Recommendations to Reduce Cardiovascular Disease

According to information compiled by the Cardiovascular Health Program within the Department of Health Services' (DHS) Division of Public Health, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among men and women of all racial and ethnic groups in Wisconsin. Each year cardiovascular disease causes more deaths than cancer, AIDS, automobile crashes, and alcohol abuse combined. Coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, and strokes are all forms of cardiovascular disease.

Cardiovascular disease was once considered a disease that only affected men, but now is also the number one killer of women, and in recent years more women than men have died from cardiovascular disease.

There are several risk factors that contribute to cardiovascular disease including overweight/obesity, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol levels, lack of physical activity, diabetes, and cigarette smoking. Fortunately, with effort these risk factors can be reduced.

Recommendations to help prevent cardiovascular disease include maintaining a healthy body weight, having your blood pressure checked every two years and controlling elevated blood pressure with medication, having your cholesterol checked every 5 years, eating a healthy low fat diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables and low fat dairy products, being physically active, and not smoking. Since cigarette smoking is a major cause of heart disease and stroke among both men and women (smokers have twice the risk of heart disease as non-smokers) quitting smoking is very important to cardiovascular health. Not only is not smoking important to your own health, it is important to the health of those around you since persons who breathe secondhand smoke are also at risk for developing heart disease.

Vernon County Health Department can provide information and resources for cardiovascular health, for smokers who want to quit, and on tobacco prevention and control efforts in Wisconsin. Public Health is working with the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Program to support a statewide smoke-free air policy.

For additional information on prevention of cardiovascular disease please contact your healthcare provider or Vernon County Health Department at 637-5251.