Heart Facts for Heart Month

February is Heart Month. We’ve been told we have to take care of our hearts by eating smart and moving more. But what is this thing in our body that keeps us going each day? And what are the risks for heart attacks? Here are some interesting facts about our heart.

♥ An adult’s heart is about the same size as two fists; children’s hearts are the size of one of their fists.
♥ Hearts beat about 100,000 times in one day. That means about 35 million times a year, which adds up to 2.5 billion times by the time you are 70 years old.
♥ Your body has about 6 quarts of blood, which circulates through your body throughout the day. This blood goes through more than 60,000 miles of vessels. That’s the distance an average car will travel in 5 years.
♥ The diameter of a garden hose is about the size of the largest artery in the body, the aorta. It takes 10 capillaries, the smallest blood vessels, to equal the thickness of a human hair.

As you think of all the hard work this little muscle does in a lifetime, you may want to lead your life in ways that reduce the risk for heart attacks. Here are some of the risks that we can control.

♥ Increase our good cholesterol and decrease our bad cholesterol – The unhealthy combination of “good” and “bad” cholesterol quadruples the risk.
♥ Control or prevent diabetes – Diabetes quadruples the risk for women and doubles the risk for men.
♥ Control or prevent high blood pressure – High blood pressure nearly triples the risk for men and doubles the risk for women.
♥ Find ways to decrease stress and control depression – Stress and depression almost triple the risk.
♥ Eat smart – A healthy diet can decrease the risk by 30%.
♥ Move more – Lack of physical activity increases the risk by 20%.
♥ Quit smoking – Smoking can double and in some cases even triple the risk.
♥ Decrease your waist size – Abdominal obesity more than doubles the risk.

This February make plans to work on the reducing the risks you do have so that you can add to the average 2.5 billion beats a lifetime for your heart.

Source: National Geographic

♥♥♥ To learn more about your heart and keeping it healthy, join us for a Seniors Aged 50 and Better Valentine’s Program, Give Your Heart a Healthy Beat, presented for Buncombe County Parks and Recreation. The program will be February 14, 12:00 noon, at their center at 49 Mt. Carmel Road. The lunch will cost $6. Call Grace Young at 250-4265 for more information, to register and get directions.

Inside:

Pantry Pests____________________ 2
Mildew on the Walls____________________ 2
Start Family Meetings Anytime____________________ 3
Qualities for Easier Parenting___________ 3
Refrigerator Thermometer___________ 4

NC State commits itself to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. NC State welcomes all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.
Pantry Pests

If you have ever had the experience of opening a cereal box or bag of dried pasta to see that extra protein has already infested it, you know how annoying it can be. There are a number of stored product pests that find their way into items stored on our kitchen or pantry shelves, and it is often difficult, if not impossible, to tell when the item becomes infested. Just because a box "looks" sealed does not mean that insects cannot find their way inside anytime before packaging, during storage in a warehouse, retail store or even in your home. Sometimes, pests show up in places other than a pantry. Regardless of where we find them, the key to solving the problem is to locate the source of the infestation. These insects will often attack any item made of plant material. Typical sources of a problem are items such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Food Items Attacked</th>
<th>Other Items Attacked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole or cracked grains (including rice)</td>
<td>Rodent baits (that contain grain as a feeding attractant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour, meal or similar ground grain products</td>
<td>Dry pet food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spices</td>
<td>Bird seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals</td>
<td>Grass seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta</td>
<td>Some powdered soap detergents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>Dried flowers, potpourri, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powdered milk</td>
<td>Items stuffed with dried beans or other plant material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts (whole or pieces)</td>
<td>Tobacco products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Insect pests that attack stored grains and stored products are usually beetles or moths. With the beetles, both the immatures (larvae) and the adults feed on stored products. In the case of the moths, only the larvae (caterpillars) feed on plant products; the adults either feed on nectar or they may not feed at all.

Once the infested foods have been removed from the storage area, cleaning the shelves of all crumbs is usually all that is necessary.

Mildew on the Walls

As we spend more time indoors this time of year, many people begin to look more closely at their home and notice the various areas that need attention. If you have noticed black, gray or brown spots on painted surfaces or caulked areas there is a good chance it is mildew.

Testing for mildew is pretty simple; apply a few drops of household bleach to the area. If it disappears, the colored spots are probably mildew. You can then proceed to remove all from the surface with a diluted household bleach solution of one part bleach to three parts water. It is important to protect yourself with long sleeves, rubber gloves and eye goggles. To prevent the mildew from reoccurring use a good quality latex paint, and walls or caulk when necessary with the bleach/detergent solution.

Since mildew usually forms on areas that are damp, or receive little or no direct sunlight (e.g., bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms) the problem can usually be remedied by removing the moisture source. This can be done by installing an exhaust fan in high moisture areas and repairing any pipes that are leaking immediately. If you already have an exhaust fan, make sure it is sized and working properly. Also be sure to use it when showering, creating excess steam when cooking, etc.

Other possible causes for mildew to return are:
- Use of an alkyd or oil-based paint, or lower quality latex paint.
- Failure to prime bare wood surface before applying the paint.
- Painting over a substrate or coating on which mildew has not been removed.

Caution: Always test the area to make sure the solution will not permanently damage the surface.
Operating and Maintaining Your Heat Pump

With the number of homes in Buncombe County using heat pumps as their heating source the following information can be both practical and result in savings to homeowners on their utility bills.

Proper operation of your heat pump will save energy. Do not set back the heat pump’s thermostat if it causes the backup heating to come on; backup heating systems are usually more expensive to operate. Continuous indoor fan operation can degrade heat pump performance unless a high-efficiency, variable-speed fan motor is used. Operate the system on the "auto" fan setting on the thermostat.

Like all heating and cooling systems, proper maintenance is key to efficient operation. The difference between the energy consumption of a well-maintained heat pump and a severely neglected one ranges from 10%–25%.

Clean or change filters once a month or as needed, and maintain the system according to manufacturer’s instructions. Dirty filters, coils, and fans reduce airflow through the system. Reduced airflow decreases system performance and can damage your system’s compressor. Clean outdoor coils whenever they appear dirty; occasionally, turn off power to the fan and clean it; remove vegetation and clutter from around the outdoor unit. Clean the supply and return registers within your home, and straighten their fins if bent.

You should also have a professional technician service your heat pump at least every year. The technician can do the following:

- Inspect ducts, filters, blower, and indoor coil for dirt and other obstructions
- Diagnose and seal duct leakage
- Verify adequate airflow by measurement
- Verify correct refrigerant charge by measurement
- Check for refrigerant leaks
- Inspect electric terminals, and if necessary, clean and tighten connections, and apply nonconductive coating
- Lubricate motors, and inspect belts for tightness and wear
- Verify correct electric control, making sure that heating is locked out when the thermostat calls for cooling and vice versa
- Verify correct thermostat operation.

Source: US Department of Energy

Qualities that Make for Easier Parenting

We all have our days when we may just feel that we want to throw the towel in and let our children grow up on their own. These are the days, whether the children are newborns, crawling, young children, teenagers or even adults, when we just don’t feel like we have the energy to provide positive guidance. On these days remember the qualities that make it easier to guide our children.

- Having good judgment: This means making good decisions about what is best for your child and family.
- Having patience: This is the ability to control your own impulses and to wait for your child to do things, make there own decisions or realize the answers to their problems themselves.
- Having endurance: We all need to find our own little “energizer” battery to keep us going and going and going.
- Having commitment or desire: This means staying in touch with our genuine interest in being a parent and guiding our children.
- Being involved: When you’re tired or preoccupied with other issues in your life, you need to put those aside to help guide your children.

For some of us, these qualities may not feel natural and we may need to connect with the joy of parenting, like the unconditional love you get in a hug or smile when they see you, in order to find the patience or endurance to give our children our full attention when they need it.
The Importance of a Refrigerator Thermometer

Have you ever left the refrigerator door open or had your electricity go off for hours? If this has happened to you, you may have been faced with deciding what food needed to be thrown out and what you could keep. In making this decision you first need to know what was the warmest temperature your refrigerator and freezer reached. This is usually the temperature right before the electricity comes back on or when you notice the door has been left ajar. If this temperature is still below 40°F, then you can be assured that your food is safe to keep. The only way to know the temperature inside your refrigerator and freezer is to have thermometers that read the exact temperatures for you. You can purchase these in grocery stores or other places that sell kitchen supplies. They are inexpensive and well worth it when you consider that not knowing the temperature means you have to throw out more expensive meats or other foods. So, as we are faced with the winter storms that can sometimes leave us without electricity for hours, the $5 to $15 cost for two thermometers can save money and time in the long run. For more information on what to do if your refrigerator or freezer go off or whether food is safe to eat, call our office.

NJO/CH:gs