

Hearts on Fire



Health & Wellness

Preventing Birth Defects

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 3% of babies born in the United States are born with a birth defect. Fortunately, several birth defects are preventable.

Birth Defect	Traits	Prevention
Spina Bifida & Anencephaly	Malformations of the spinal cord	Pregnant women and women who are planning on becoming pregnant need at least 400 mcg daily of folic acid
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome	Stunted growth, a flattened nasal bridge and learning disabilities	Avoid alcohol throughout pregnancy and breastfeeding
Heart Defects	Hole in heart, blocked arteries, transposed arteries, etc	Manage weight. Obese mothers have an increased chance of having a child with heart defects
Cleft Lip & Cleft Palate	Tissues that make up the lip and roof of the mouth don't completely form properly	Avoid smoking and certain medications; manage diabetes

Feeling the Pressure

One in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure (hypertension), which can lead to stroke and heart attack. Alarmingly, nearly half of the 78 million American adults with high blood pressure do not have it under control, according to the American Heart Association. If your blood pressure has tested above the normal level, take the following into account:

- ❖ Reduce Your Sodium Intake
- ❖ Exercise Regularly
- ❖ Stop Smoking
- ❖ Limit Alcohol Consumption
- ❖ De-stress

Visit your doctor to create a plan of action.



Turn Down the Heat

They don't call this time of year the Dog Days of Summer for nothing. Because of the high temperatures and abundant sunshine, the risk of heat stroke is high this month.



Q: What is heat stroke?

A: Your body overheats as a result of being outside in high temperatures for too long, or excessive exercise. If heat stroke is untreated, it can damage your brain, heart, kidneys and muscles, and even lead to death.

Q: What symptoms should I look for?

A: A body temperature of 104 F or higher, an altered mental state (think confusion and slurred speech), and dark urine.

Q: How can I prevent heat stroke?

- ❖ Wear Loose-fitting, Lightweight Clothing
- ❖ Stay Hydrated
- ❖ Don't Wait in Parked Cars
- ❖ Exercise Before Sunrise and After Sunset
- ❖ Limit Your Time Outdoors

Q: What should I do if I suspect heat stroke?

A: Seek immediate medical attention. In the meantime, get the person into an air-conditioned place and cool them with a misting fan, a tub of cool water, wet towels, etc.

Benefit Spotlight

Transportation Savings Accounts

A growing number of companies offer Workplace Transportation Accounts (also known as a Commuter Savings Accounts or Commuter Expense Reimbursement Accounts).

These accounts offer employees the opportunity to contribute pre-tax dollars that can be used to pay for public transportation (including vanpool) or parking expenses incurred getting to and from work. One major perk of these accounts is that since the funds are taken from your paycheck pre-tax, your taxable income is reduced. Reminder: The monthly contribution limits set by the IRS for 2015 are \$130 for public transportation and \$250 for qualified parking.

