

S.A.F.E. Newsletter

Bless Your Heart

February is American Heart Month, a time when all people—especially women—are encouraged to focus on their cardiovascular health. Heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) affect more than 1.5 million Americans each year. Heart disease is the nation's number one killer among both men and women and the leading cause of health disparities across the country. While national death rates have been declining steadily for the last 40 years, this trend appears to be stalling.



In 2021, the age-adjusted death rate of heart disease was 231 per 100,000 Arkansas residents. That's 32.91% higher than the overall heart disease death rate in the United States. In 2022, that number increased to 285 per 100,000. Arkansas is consistently ranked near the bottom of the United States in health rankings. In 2023, U.S. News & World Report ranked Arkansas 45th in the country, and the United Health Foundation and American Public Health Association ranked Arkansas 48th in the nation.

The good news is that you can help reduce your risk and improve your heart health by following the ABCS!



Aspirin
when
appropriate



Blood
Pressure
control



Cholesterol
management



Smoking
cessation

Ask your health care professional if aspirin can reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Be sure to tell your health care professional if you have a family history of heart disease or stroke, and mention your own medical history.

High blood pressure increases your risk for heart attack or stroke more than any other risk factor. Find out what your blood pressure numbers are, and ask your health care professional what those numbers mean for your health. If you have high blood pressure, work with your health care professional to lower it.

Your body needs cholesterol, but when you have too much, it can build up in your arteries and cause heart disease. There are different types of cholesterol, one helps protect against heart

disease while the other can increase your risks. Talk to your health care team about your cholesterol levels and how to lower your bad cholesterol if it's too high.

Smoking raises your blood pressure, which increases your risk for heart attack and stroke. If you smoke, quit. Talk with your health care professional about ways to help you stick with your decision. It's never too late to quit smoking.

This month, make a heart smart promise and commit to making healthy lifestyle changes to protect your heart. For more information visit the American Heart Association at www.heart.org.





Did You Wash Your Hands?

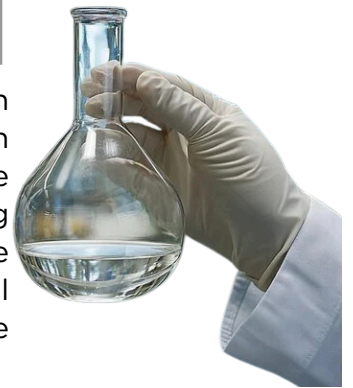
Stay healthy during peak flu season by practicing proper handwashing techniques, especially at work. Wash your hands frequently, particularly after being in public spaces or coughing and sneezing. If soap and water are unavailable, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Hand hygiene is crucial because it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs and infections, helping to protect against illnesses like colds, flu, and diarrhea.

Proper handwashing removes bacteria and viruses from your hands which you can easily transfer to your eyes, nose, and mouth, or contaminate food and surfaces you touch; essentially acting as a primary defense against numerous diseases.

The majority of germs that cause serious infections in humans are transmitted by people's actions. One of the most effective means to prevent these infections is by practicing good hand hygiene. Hand hygiene is an essential infection control practice in healthcare settings. By adhering to recommended guidelines and techniques, healthcare workers can significantly reduce the risk of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and improve patient safety.

EPA Rule Updates: DCM

Methylene chloride, also known as dichloromethane (DCM), is a common solvent used in a variety of consumer/commercial applications and is found in many academic research labs. The EPA determined that methylene chloride poses an "unreasonable risk to human health or the environment" following review under Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) regulations. The final rule was published in April 2024, which prohibits most consumer and commercial uses. An exemption for laboratory use is granted, provided that a workplace chemical protection program (WCPP) is developed.



To comply with the new rule, laboratories and other research units are required to evaluate options for eliminating methylene chloride from their operations or substitute it with a less hazardous alternative. Units that continue use of methylene chloride must be granted approval by EHS, implement all components of the UAMS WCPP, complete operation specific exposure control plans, and maintain personal exposures below the EPA exposure limits.

UAMS EH&S will contact units that have reported intent to continue use of methylene chloride or have methylene chloride listed in their chemical inventory. The initial exposure assessment and personal exposure monitoring will consist of a review of procedures conducted, exposure controls utilized, and monitoring of airborne methylene chloride concentrations within the breathing zone of exposed persons.

All laboratories are required review their chemical storage areas to ensure an accurate inventory record of all methylene chloride and mixtures that contain methylene chloride in concentrations greater than or equal to 0.1%. Old, surplus, and unneeded inventory of methylene chloride should be sent for disposal by initiating a Chemical Waste Pick Up Request in the TMA Work Order system by Friday, February 28. Please contact the Chemical Hygiene Office at 501-686-6958 with questions and/or concerns.

Heart Health



WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Keeping your heart healthy is one of the most important things you can do. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Luckily, you can reduce your risks for heart disease. This word search list has tips to do just that. Look across, down, diagonally, upside down, and backward to find the words in bold.

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EXERCISE to build a healthy heart.

WALKING is one of the best, all-around exercises.

VISIT your health professional regularly.

STOP smoking.

CONTROL your blood pressure.

WATCH your weight.

Eat heart **SMART**.

Read **NUTRITION** labels.

Get plenty of **SLEEP**.

REDUCE "bad" cholesterol levels.

Keep **DIABETES** in check.

Boost your **MENTAL** and **EMOTIONAL** health.

MANAGE stress.

Know the warning **SIGNS** of heart disease.