

Maine cardiovascular health program (mcvhp)

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Maine.

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By promoting a lifestyle that includes physical activity, healthy eating and being tobacco-free, the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program (MCVHP) is working hard to improve heart health and prevent and reduce the incidence of cardiovascular diseases in Maine.

Most cases of cardiovascular disease are preventable, so this is a health crisis we can solve.



Maine Cardiovascular Health Program Vision

- To have the people in Maine be heart healthy and stroke-free

Maine Cardiovascular Health Program Goals

- To reduce death, disability and health care costs due to cardiovascular disease.
- To reduce the controllable risks for cardiovascular disease: physical inactivity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and overweight/obesity.
- The Maine Cardiovascular Health Program especially focuses on populations that are disproportionately harmed by cardiovascular disease. These populations include low-income residents, people living in rural counties, Native Americans, women fifty and older, and persons with diabetes.

What is Cardiovascular Disease?

Cardiovascular Disease refers to a variety of diseases and conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels. The two most common cardiovascular diseases are heart disease and stroke.

A Health Crisis in Maine:

- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Maine.
- About four out of every ten people in Maine die from cardiovascular disease.
- Cardiovascular disease causes over 4,000 Maine deaths every single year.
- There are over 29,000 hospitalizations every year in Maine as a result of cardiovascular disease.
- Cardiovascular disease accounts for 25% of all Maine hospital costs.
- Most cases of cardiovascular disease are preventable, so this is a health crisis we can solve.

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What Causes Cardiovascular Disease?

Risk factors are behaviors or conditions that increase your chances of developing cardiovascular disease. Most of the risk factors for cardiovascular disease are largely within your control. The risk factors are:

1. **High blood pressure**
High blood pressure is a major factor for heart disease and stroke.
 - Over one-quarter of Maine adults report having been told that their blood pressure is high. High blood pressure is considered: the systolic (the upper number) is 140 mm Hg or higher and the diastolic (the lower number) is 90 mm Hg or higher.
2. **High blood cholesterol**
Cholesterol is a natural substance found in all living tissue, but when too much of it builds up in your arteries, it can be dangerous.
 - About three-quarters of Maine adults report that they had their cholesterol checked within the last five years.
3. **Tobacco use**
Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of serious illnesses such as heart disease and stroke.
 - On average, tobacco kills seven Maine people every day. One of these is a nonsmoker who dies because of exposure to secondhand smoke.
4. **Physical inactivity**
Physical activity can control blood pressure, reduce cholesterol levels, and aid in controlling and maintaining weight.
 - More than one-half of Maine adults are sedentary, not getting enough physical activity for health benefits.
5. **Poor nutrition**
Children and adults should control fat, particularly saturated fat, in their diets and increase fruits and vegetables in their diets.
 - Three-quarters of Maine adults eat less than the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables.
6. **Overweight/obesity**
The combination of physical inactivity and poor nutrition has given rise to an alarming increase in the obesity rate in Maine.
 - In Maine, obesity and overweight rates have both risen 20% over the past 10 years.
 - 13% of Maine High School Students are overweight and 15% are at risk for becoming overweight.
 - Today, over half, (56.3%) of Maine adults are overweight or obese.
7. **Diabetes**
If you have a family history of diabetes, your risk of heart attack and stroke is automatically increased.
 - Two-thirds of people with diabetes die of some form of heart or blood vessel disease.

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Heart Attack Warning Signs

The American Heart Association says the warning signs of a Heart Attack are:

- **Chest Discomfort**
Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back
- **Discomfort in Other Areas of the Upper Body**
This may be felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of Breath**
May often occur with or before chest discomfort.
- **Other Signs**
May include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.

If you or someone you are with begins to have chest discomfort call 9-1-1 right away. If you can't call 9-1-1, have someone else drive you to the hospital right away. Never drive yourself, unless you have absolutely no other choice.

Stroke Warning Signs

The American Stroke Association says the warning signs of a stroke are:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

If you see or have one or more of these symptoms, don't wait - call 911 right away.

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Here's what you can do to help

By promoting a lifestyle that includes physical activity, healthy eating, being tobacco-free, and controlling your blood pressure and blood cholesterol, the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program (MCVHP) is working hard to improve heart health and prevent and reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease in Maine.

Below are some suggestions on what you can do to help:

In Schools

- Make sure that health and physical education curricula meet state requirements for Maine Learning Results.
- Ask that healthy food options like low-fat milk, vegetables and fruits always be available.
- See that vending machines offer healthy food options, not soda and candy.
- Urge implementation of a policy banning tobacco use on school grounds and at all school functions.
- Work with school and town officials to develop and maintain safe walking and biking routes to school.

At home

Talk to your children about limiting unhealthy foods such as fast food and junk food. Put the focus on health, not on appearance, to avoid extreme dieting and an obsession with body weight.

- Always check food labels for fat, calorie and sodium content. Avoid buying sugary cereals.
- Plan family activities such as walking, hiking or biking.
- Limit the amount of television children watch; no more than 2 hours per day.
- If you smoke, make an effort to stop. Keep your children safe from secondhand smoke. Teach them from an early age the dangers of tobacco use.
- If you have high blood pressure and are prescribed medication, take it as directed.
- A diet with 30% or fewer total calories from fat and low in saturated fat along with regular exercise may lower your cholesterol level. If you are placed on a cholesterol lowering medication, be sure to take it as it is prescribed.
- Know the warning signs for heart attacks and strokes.

At work

Encourage your boss to:

- Create indoor and outdoor walking routes and/or fitness trails around the premises.
- Enhance benefits to cover tobacco cessation and nutrition counseling.
- Provide vending machines with healthy foods and drinks.
- Implement policies banning all tobacco use in buildings, entryways and grounds.
- Serve healthy foods at company meetings.
- Provide onsite blood pressure and cholesterol screening programs.

In the community

- Ask that school gyms and pools be available during evening and/or weekend hours for public use.
- Ask town planners to require sidewalks and bike paths in new developments.
- Work for tobacco-free environments.
- Ask local restaurants to offer low or non-fat milk and salad dressings, as well as healthy entrees.
- Encourage community groups to provide a healthy food option at events they sponsor.
- Work with local community groups and town officials to develop and maintain safe walking and biking trails.

With your health care provider

- Have your blood pressure checked at every visit to your provider or at least every two years. Ask your provider what your blood pressure is.
- Ask to have your cholesterol checked at least every five years.
- If you have a family history of diabetes, request to have a blood test done to check for it.
- Ask your provider for information on how you can decrease your risk of having heart disease and/or stroke.
- If you smoke, talk to your provider about ways to stop smoking.

Maine Cardiovascular Health Program Activities

Working through a network of community, government, and health partners, the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program explores prevention opportunities in neighborhood, school, work site, and health care settings. Program components include:

- Assisting the 31 Healthy Maine Community Partnerships and other community groups to address physical inactivity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- Assisting businesses in implementing low or no-cost strategies to improve employee health.
- Developing and conducting a statewide media and public awareness campaign on physical activity and nutrition.
- Developing state-level policies that support individuals making healthy choices.

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Funding

Funding is provided by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from the Cardiovascular Health Program. Funding is provided by The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

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Get the Facts

Click below to download the Fact Sheet.

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ADA Compliant TXT Versions

- | | |
|---|---|
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| ■ CVH Strategic Plan
- Addendum
- Summary | ■ CVH Strategic Plan
- Addendum
- Summary |
| ■ Youth Fact Sheet | ■ Youth Fact Sheet |



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PAN Action Packets

Promoting Trail Development and Use of Safe Community Routes for Walking and Biking Action Packet

This Action Packet will help you promote community health through trail development and use of safe routes for walking and biking. You'll find guidelines for creating the partnerships needed to make your trail projects succeed.

Click below to download/open the Action Packet.

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PAN Plan

Maine has been awarded a grant from the CDC to complete the State PAN Plan and develop additional capacity and infrastructure for nutrition and physical activity in Maine. We will use this time to review important information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and work on completing the draft that was started in 1999. This information is intended specifically for Maine Physical Activity and Nutrition (PAN) Plan Stakeholders to discuss the completion of the Plan.

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[Components 1](#)

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Develop Policies that Support Healthy Eating at Group Events Action Packet

This Action Packet focuses on developing policies that support healthy eating at group events. It provides the tools and resources you need to create partnerships that will help you achieve your goals.

Click below to download/open the Action Packet.

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