

Feb. 20, 2017

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN MARION COUNTY CELEBRATES AMERICAN HEART MONTH



Contact:

Christy Jergens, Public Information Officer
Christy.Jergens@FLHealth.gov
352-629-0137, ext. 2052
Mobile: 352-266-5597

OCALA, Fla.— February marks the beginning of American Heart Month, and it is a great time to commit to a healthy lifestyle and make small changes that can lead to a lifetime of heart health and help fight heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in Florida and the nation.

Each year, heart disease causes one in four deaths in the United States. There were 42,835 heart attack hospitalizations in Florida in 2014 or an average of 117 heart attack hospitalizations each day.

“Heart disease has a serious impact on the long-term health of county residents,” said Florida Department of Health in Marion County Health Officer Erin Hess. “Addressing the risk factors that you may have goes a long way toward helping fight heart disease and living a healthier life.”

About half of all Americans have at least one of the three risk factors for heart disease, which include high blood pressure, high cholesterol and smoking. While all Americans are at risk for heart disease, the non-Hispanic black community is at the greatest risk.

Many of the risk factors for heart disease can be eliminated with diet, exercise and taking steps to quit smoking. During American Heart Month, follow these simple tips to keep your heart healthy and fight heart disease.

- Add exercise to your daily routine, even if it's just taking regular walks with family and friends;
- Schedule a visit with your doctor to talk about your heart health;
- Increase healthy eating by cooking heart healthy meals; and
- Take steps to quit smoking by utilizing the [Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way Program](#).

Marion County residents age 60 and older have several upcoming opportunities this month to learn about heart topics. Florida Department of Health in Marion County staff will give presentations on heart-healthy living at 10:30 a.m. on the following dates at the below Marion Senior Services congregate meal locations.

- Feb. 23, 2017: Sparr United Methodist Church (12990 NE Jacksonville Road)
- Feb. 27, 2017: Marion Oaks Community Center (294 Marion Oaks Lane)

Those interested in the Senior Services events should RSVP (352- 620-3501) at least 48 hours in advance if planning on participating in the congregate meal program. All others should RSVP 24 hours ahead of time.

The Department of Health will also hold a public lunch and learn event on Feb. 24 from 11 a.m.- 1 p.m. at its main office (1801 SE 32nd Ave.) on controlling blood pressure.

If you are interested in a heart health speaker for your organization, please contact Florida Department of Health in Marion County Health Educator Jessie Driggers at 352-629-0137, ext. 2084.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health, please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.