

*Getting to the  
Heart of the  
Matter*



From Our Hearts to Yours



# Take Charge of Your Health: Know the Facts

Despite advances in the diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease, chronic illness and death from cardiovascular disease is higher among Black Americans than among White, Hispanic and Asian Americans.

## Risk Factors

Traits or behaviors that increase your risk for heart attack and stroke are called risk factors. African Americans have the greatest chance of having cardiovascular disease. Some of the common risk factors are hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and smoking.

Some risk factors can be changed or treated. Others can not:

### What you CAN change:

- ♥ Smoking
- ♥ High Cholesterol
- ♥ High Blood Pressure
- ♥ Physical Inactivity
- ♥ Being Overweight

### What you CAN NOT change:

- ♥ Age
- ♥ Family History
- ♥ Race and Ethnicity



**The Center for  
African American Health**  
Empowering the Community to

*Live Well!*



Center for  
**Women's  
Health  
Research**

## Warning Signs of a Heart Attack

- ♥ Chest discomfort like pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain;
- ♥ Discomfort in areas of the upper body including one or both arms and back. In some cases women can experience pain in the neck, jaw or stomach;
- ♥ Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, and light headedness.

## Warning Signs of a Stroke

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

## If you believe someone is suffering a stroke, act **F.A.S.T.**

- ♥ **Face** – have the person smile to check for drooping on one side of the face;
- ♥ **Arms** – have the person extend both of their arms out to check for weakness on one side;
- ♥ **Speech** – have the person repeat a simple sentence to check for slurred speech;
- ♥ **Time** – is of the essence! Seek medical attention immediately.