

Health Awareness

Is Heart Disease Or Stroke A Part Of Your Family History?

(NAPSA)—How many people do you know who have been affected by heart disease or stroke? How many have been your family members? Fifty-five-year-old Gail had lost nearly everyone in her family to cardiovascular disease and when she lost her father, too, she fell into poor eating habits that made her cholesterol and blood pressure levels soar. Her risk for heart disease and stroke had never been higher.

The Problem

Heart attacks and strokes cause one of every three deaths in the U.S. Americans suffer more than 2 million heart attacks and strokes each year, and every day, 2,200 people die from cardiovascular disease. If you're over 20, there's a 50 percent chance that you, like Gail, have at least one of the major risk factors for heart disease and stroke—high blood pressure, high cholesterol or you smoke.

What's Being Done

To help Americans understand these risks and control them, there's now a national initiative by the Department of Health and Human Services called Million Hearts™. It aims to prevent a million heart attacks and strokes in the U.S. over the next five years. One in three Americans has high blood pressure and one in three has high cholesterol and many don't even know it or realize they can take steps to control both blood pressure and cholesterol.

What Gail Did

Gail knew she had to make a change when she realized her daughter was sneaking into her bedroom in the middle of the night to be sure her mother was still breathing. She started with small steps—five minutes of physical activity every day, eating more fruits and vegetables, and monitoring her blood pressure. These simple changes rewarded her with big results. She now has healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

What You Can Do

Take the Million Hearts™ pledge:

- Prevent heart disease and



Fifty-five-year-old Gail has pledged to help prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes in the next five years. You can, too.

stroke in your family by understanding the risks.

- Know your ABCS—Appropriate aspirin therapy, Blood pressure control, Cholesterol control, Smoking cessation.

- Fuel your body by eating a heart-healthy diet, high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium, saturated and trans fats, and cholesterol.

- Take control of your heart health by following your doctor's instructions for medications and treatment.

"Heart disease takes the lives of far too many people in this country, depriving their families and communities of someone they love and care for—a father, a mother, a wife, a friend, a neighbor, a spouse," said Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "And I know that sense of personal loss, because my mother is one of those statistics."

A commitment to better cardiovascular health from millions of Americans will mean lives saved for years to come and a possible savings of more than \$400 billion in health care costs.

Learn More

Visit <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov> to discover more about your risk for heart attack and stroke, and take the Million Hearts™ pledge, as Gail did.