

Bless Your

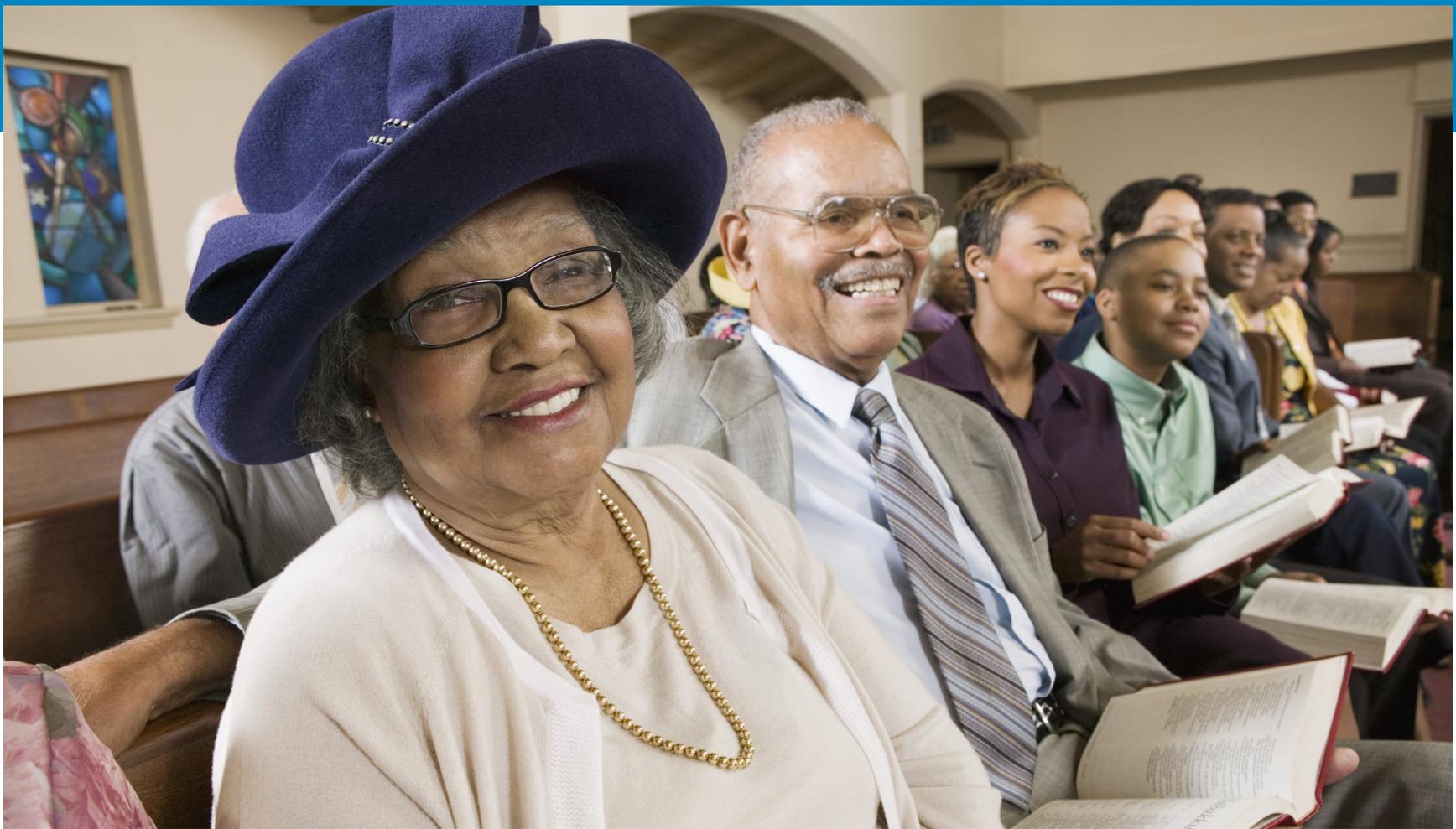


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Introduction

Virginia's 100 Congregations for Million Hearts® is a faith-based program designed to help guide congregations toward a heart-healthy lifestyle. The purpose of Virginia's 100 Congregations for Million Hearts® is to enlist the support of faith-based organizations to help raise awareness and prevent cardiovascular disease and focus on hypertension control. In joining the program, your congregation has agreed to take the first step towards reducing the impact of two of the leading causes of death in the United States: heart disease and stroke.

We know that an important aspect of communities is the church. So, we've created this resource to help congregations understand the vital role they play in improving the health of their members and their communities.

Why is this health issue important?

- Heart disease and stroke are the first and fourth leading causes of death in the United States.
- Heart disease is responsible for 1 of every 4 deaths in the country.
- It has been proven that engaging communities to work together using education and support can affect change in the number of deaths caused by heart disease and stroke.

What is Virginia's 100 Congregations for Million Hearts®'s goal?

Virginia's goal is to recruit 100 faith-based organizations into the national Million Hearts® initiative. The national campaign's goal is to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017.

Want to know more?

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www.vdh.virginia.gov/OMHHE/ | twitter.com/vahealthequity | www.facebook.com/vdhomehhe

Creating or Strengthening a Health Ministry

What is a Health Ministry?

A health ministry is a recognized team of people who sponsor regular educational events and experiences and distribute information that promotes well-being, focusing on the wholeness of body, mind and spirit within the members of a congregation and the people in the community it serves.

Three reasons to develop a congregational health ministry:

1. Health problems, both temporary and chronic, are found, but not always discussed, among congregation members. Better health can be achieved after the risks have been identified and addressed.
2. Community congregations are found in places where health education, prevention programs and even medical care are not adequate and available to all people. Outreach through congregations is a great way to build community health partnerships.
3. Most congregations are already involved in the ministry of health, to some extent. Health ministries that are intentional and organized can assist and support busy pastors/clergy.

Congregation Goals and Objectives

One of the main goals of Bless Your Heart and Virginia's 100 Congregations for Million Hearts® is to encourage congregation members to live a heart-healthy lifestyle. In order to do this, we need to identify the goals for your congregation. This will help you design a program that reaches your members and determines if the program is really helping your members. Some examples of these congregation-wide goals include:

- Finding members who want to participate in the program
- Learning what those members need and want from a heart-health program
- Teaching members about available educational resources and how they can help
- Creating programs to best reach congregational members, such as an exercise class or a community garden
- Providing classes that teach members about heart health and ways they can start living a heart-healthy lifestyle
- Evaluating your health ministry programs and recommending changes to improve the success of the program

Program Design

If you are interested in starting or improving your health ministry, you might find program design useful. Program design includes four main areas: planning, assessing needs, carrying out the program and measuring its effectiveness.

Planning

Planning for your goals is the first step in building a successful program. This is not a quick step. It will take time to develop the action plan behind your program. However, taking time with congregational members to lay out your ideas and strategies is the first step in making your program a success.

Assessing Needs

What health concerns affect your congregation members? What programs would your members like to see at your faith-based organization? Which programs would they attend? Who are the members of your congregation (demographics)? How does the makeup of your congregation affect your program? Questions like these are important to your planning process. Health programs are most effective when they target a specific group of people. Knowing details about your congregation will be important to developing your health program.

Taking Action

After planning and assessing your needs, it's time to start your program. Here, it's important to keep communication clear and keep a close eye on how your program is doing. There will almost certainly be some issues that arise you didn't anticipate. By focusing on clear communication and monitoring your program closely, you will be able to identify problems quickly and make adjustments as needed.

Clear communication will also let you celebrate some early successes of your program, which in turn can motivate other members of your congregation to participate.

Measurement

This final step helps you see how well your programs are reaching your congregation. Are members of your congregation attending? Where have you seen the best results? How can you improve your program? Evaluation can include surveys or focus groups, but it can also include informal conversations with congregational members to see what is working or what might need to change.

Health Ministry Spotlight

**Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
Congregational Health Ministry
Fairfax, VA**

<http://tiny.cc/ouirax>

A slideshow that presents the framework of how they developed their health ministry program.

Sending a Health Message to Your Congregation

Health education uses programs that have been shown to work through research. Here, we will provide some of those methods for encouraging good heart health in your congregation:

- Starting a health ministry led by church members.

This is the first step in building a foundation for your congregation's health programs.

- Encouraging pastors and their families to promote health programs.

This will show the congregation that these programs are important to the church's mission. Studies have shown that sermons which focus on health are more likely to get church members involved in health programs.

- Creating a health bulletin board.
- Reinforcing health messages with bulletin inserts.
- Writing newsletter articles that promote a heart-healthy lifestyle.

These articles can reinforce health messages delivered in the sermon. Newsletters can reach a bigger audience because they usually go to all church members, not just those who are there on Sunday.

- Creating support groups.

These groups can encourage members who are working to control their blood pressure or who want to quit smoking. Support groups let members share their victories and provide encouragement to those who want to improve their health.



The Model for Healthy Living

The Model for Healthy Living, created by the Church Health Center in Memphis, TN, offers a great way to visually express the connection among all aspects of our lives.



When one part is out of balance, it affects everything else. The Model for Healthy Living helps bring each aspect of a person's life to the church. The church then helps its congregation become healthier people by strengthening all of these different parts of their lives. In so doing, the church itself becomes alive for its members each day, not just on Sunday.

Use the model's assessment wheel (<http://tiny.cc/xyirax>) to help your church members identify areas of improvement in their lives, and that can serve as a focus area in the creation or strengthening of your health ministry.

To learn more about incorporating the Model for Healthy Living into your health ministry's program, visit <http://tiny.cc/yzirax>.

Tips For Building a Health Ministry in Your Congregation

- Meet with your congregational leader to get permission to begin a health ministry. Get approvals from the leadership and the congregation. It's important to get leadership support to ensure a successful program.
- Develop a health and wellness survey (see sample on page 7) or use the MHL assessment wheel and give it to your congregation to complete. This will help you find out the health concerns in your congregation. Once you know the results of the survey, you will be able to focus on those areas that are most important to your members.
- Provide other opportunities for members to share their health concerns by holding regular health team meetings that are open to the congregation or placing a suggestion box in a prominent location.
- Find out if there are health professionals in your congregation, such as nurses, educators, physicians, paramedics, outreach workers, or even just interested persons.
- Share health facts with your congregation or include health facts in your announcements or bulletins. Health facts will let the congregation know how important it is to begin working on healthier living.
- Report the results of the survey to the congregation.
- Form a Wellness Team to plan the next steps for classes, programs or activities that will provide information about one of the most important areas from the survey. Include all age levels in the planning of programs.
- To increase visibility within the congregation, name the Wellness Team. Some examples include Temple for God, Healthy Body, Glorified Soul, Health Angels, Wellness Warriors, Healthy for Christ, the Vitality Program, etc.
- Refer to the Resources section in this toolkit for organizations that can help you address the health concerns discovered in the survey.
- Collect educational materials from health organizations (see page 45) to place in an area where your members can read them. Some places might be your Fellowship Hall, the Activity Center or the Narthex.
- Report to the congregation activities planned by the Wellness Team. Get feedback from the congregation so your activities will encourage everyone to participate.
- Have a "Kick-Off Celebration" for your health ministry. Provide prizes for those beginning an exercise program, eating "Five-A-Day" (fruits and vegetables) or getting their routine health screenings (prostate, breast, cervical and colon). Think about checking blood pressures weekly for your members or starting a walking club.
- Celebrate all steps your congregation takes to have better health.

Health & Wellness Survey

Our Health and Wellness Committee is conducting a health survey of all church members. The purpose of this survey is to better serve you by guiding the health programs we provide through our ministry.

Please answer the following questions and leave your completed survey where instructed:

I am _____ years old

I am: _____ Male _____ Female

I have high blood pressure: _____ Yes _____ No

I have a heart condition: _____ Yes _____ No

I have high cholesterol: _____ Yes _____ No

I have diabetes: _____ Yes _____ No

I have sleep apnea: _____ Yes _____ No

I have a knee, hip or other joint problems: _____ Yes _____ No

I need or have needed cancer support: _____ Yes _____ No

I am interested in learning more about my health through (check all that apply):

_____ Exercise programs

_____ Articles

_____ Smoking cessation program

_____ Recipes

_____ Health-related tours

_____ Health fair

_____ Invited speakers

_____ Other

I am available to talk about any of these topics at the following times and dates:

Time of day I am available:

___ Morning ___ During the day

___ Evening

Is there a specific time(s) during the day that you'd like to be contacted?

Days of the week I'm available:

___ Monday _____ Friday

___ Tuesday _____ Saturday

___ Wednesday _____ Sunday

___ Thursday

My Name: _____

My Phone Number: _____

Thank you for completing this survey!

Planning a Successful Health Fair

For any new or established health ministry, a health fair is a useful way to spread health messages to members of your congregation. Vendors can come and perform health screenings such as cholesterol or blood pressure checks. You may also want to invite speakers to address health topics, such as improving nutrition or lowering your risk for heart and blood vessel disease. The following list shows some potential vendors to consider and tips for successful planning.

Potential vendors include:

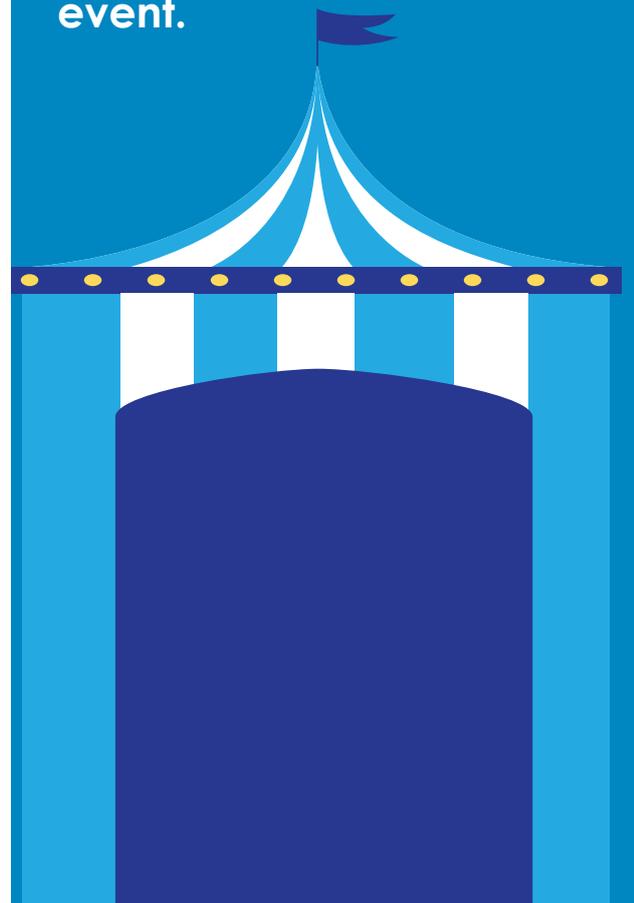
- Local clinics or hospitals providing blood pressure or cholesterol checks.
- Nonprofit or government agencies promoting health initiatives like OMHHE, the American Heart Association or the local health department.
- Weight loss facilities, gyms or spas recruiting new membership, such as the YMCA.
- Local grocers or farmers' markets offering healthy food options.
- Farm-to-work program leaders or local community garden members.
- Physical activity groups for kids, adults and seniors.
- Nursing students from your local universities and schools of nursing.
- Local pharmacists, physicians and nurses.
- Local rescue squads and fire departments.
- Local Virginia Cooperative Extension office.



Tips for a Successful Health Fair

- **Develop a budget.** How much can you spend on advertising/promotion for your event? Will you provide food? How will that affect your budget? Are there other costs associated with your event you should consider?
- **Set a date, time and location** for your health fair. Check out your community calendar so you pick a date that does not conflict with other major events.
- **Consider your vendors.** This not only includes those you will invite but also what needs they have the day of the event (tables, electrical outlets, spacing). It is a good idea to create and send an initial invitation letter either through traditional mail or email to explain the event and ask them to participate. You can follow up by phone to address questions or contact those who do not respond to your invitation. Before the event, vendors should also receive a confirmation letter which includes instructions for the event.
- **Invite guest speakers.** Depending on your location and times, you may want to invite a guest speaker to give a presentation during your health fair. The same process applies for guest speakers as the vendors. Provide the speaker with a formal invitation to attend, consider their equipment and space needs and follow up with them prior to the health fair with a confirmation letter and phone call.
- **Gather volunteers.** Volunteers are essential to a successful health fair. Decide how many you need and what duties you need them to perform. Ask them to sign up in advance. Create a work schedule. Consider setup, work necessary during the event and clean up. Also, if possible, a planning committee member should be on hand to answer any questions or help volunteers solve any issues that may occur.
- **Consider the details.** Do you need name tags or access to electrical outlets? Are there any traffic or parking issues to consider? Who will replenish food or drinks if they are provided? Do trash cans need to be emptied during the event? Who can monitor that process?

Your planning committee will discuss topics to cover and vendors to invite, as well as details, like date and time of the event. Think about which church members can bring their talents, such as those with planning skills or health knowledge. Start the planning process early – it might take up to a year to plan your event.



Tips for a Successful Health Fair

continued...

- **Publicize the event.** Include information about the health fair in church bulletins, newsletters, flyers, local newspapers, etc.
- **Set up your health fair early.** You can have vendors set up the day before or the morning of the event. Make sure it is early enough so that everything is ready before participants arrive at the event.
- **Thank vendors, speakers and volunteers.** Personal thank you notes, either through email or in a letter, will let them know you value their time and participation. You can even include a “save the date” note within your thank you letter to invite them to your next health fair.
- **Evaluations.** You may want to ask your health fair attendees to fill out an evaluation form as they leave the event. Feedback about their experience is useful for future planning purposes. Attendees who complete the form can enter a drawing for a door prize, increasing your response rate. You may also want feedback from vendors and guest speakers about their experience as well.
- **Follow up** with those who had abnormal screenings.

OMHHE's staff is here to help facilitate your efforts. We can provide speakers or health information. Contact health equity specialist, Augustine Doe, at 804-864-7436 or augustine.doe@vdh.virginia.gov.



Sample Bulletin Health Announcements

- **Million Hearts® – ABCS**

The goal of the Million Hearts® project is to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. Million Hearts has tools that help Americans make healthier choices. Million Hearts is also focusing on improving the quality of care. It does this through four steps known as the ABCS: aspirin for people at risk, blood pressure control, cholesterol control and quitting smoking. The next time you see your doctor, talk about your heart health and which ABCS affect you.

- **Heart Disease, Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease**

Heart disease is a term that describes a group of heart conditions. The most common type of heart disease in the U.S. is coronary artery disease. Having coronary artery disease can lead to heart problems like heart attack, chest pain, heart failure and irregular heartbeat.

A stroke happens when a clot or broken blood vessel blocks blood from flowing to the brain. Brain damage received during a stroke is sometimes reversible, but often can be permanent.

Cardiovascular disease describes all diseases that affect the heart or blood vessels, including heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure and coronary artery disease. There are risk factors for heart and blood vessel disease that cannot be controlled, like age, race and gender. However, there are many factors that can change, like high cholesterol, smoking, exercise, obesity and high blood pressure. Talk with your doctor about your own risk for heart disease, stroke and heart and blood vessel disease.

- **Aspirin Use**

You should also ask your doctor if taking a daily aspirin is right for you. In addition to pain relief, aspirin may prevent heart disease and stroke. There are both benefits and risks in taking aspirin. It can reduce swelling from heart disease, stop blood clots and reduce risk of death in heart patients and in the elderly. It can also lower your risk of heart damage if you do have a heart attack. However, a daily aspirin can also lead to ulcers and internal bleeding. And if you do have a stroke, aspirin can increase your risk of bleeding in the brain. Some people should take a daily aspirin, including those with coronary artery disease, anyone who has had a heart attack or stroke and those who have had bypass surgery. Some people should not take aspirin every day because of their medical history or possible side effects when aspirin reacts with other drugs. That's why you should always talk to your doctor before you take aspirin every day.

- **Blood pressure**

Blood pressure is a term that describes how hard blood pushes against artery walls. Blood pressure is measured with two numbers. Systolic pressure measures when the heart beats. That's the top number of a blood pressure reading. Diastolic pressure measures

Sample Bulletin Health Announcements *continued...*

when the heart relaxes between beats. That's the bottom number on a blood pressure reading. A normal top number is usually less than 120, while a normal bottom number is usually less than 80. High blood pressure happens when either of the two numbers is higher than normal. That causes the heart to work harder than it usually would, which can lead to heart disease, kidney disease, stroke and blindness. You can control high blood pressure by staying at a healthy weight, exercising, eating a healthy diet, only drinking a moderate amount of alcohol, taking blood pressure drugs and quitting smoking. Taking care of high blood pressure can lower your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

- **Cholesterol**

Cholesterol is a fatty substance that is in your blood. Cholesterol comes from food and from your liver. We need some cholesterol to live, but too much can build up in your blood vessels and block blood flow. There are two forms of cholesterol, called LDL and HDL. LDL is the "bad" cholesterol. This is the kind that clogs your arteries and increases your risk for heart attack and stroke. HDL is the "good" cholesterol. HDL helps your body get rid of bad cholesterol. You want your LDL to stay under 100 mg/dL, and you want your HDL to stay above 60 mg/dL. When you get your cholesterol checked, the number your doctor tells you is your LDL added to your HDL, plus 20 percent of your triglyceride level. A normal total cholesterol level is under 200 mg/dL. You should have your cholesterol checked every year. If your cholesterol is at an unhealthy level, talk with your doctor about lowering it. Reducing your cholesterol also lowers your risk for heart attack or stroke.

- **Quitting Smoking**

The Virginia Department of Health offers free tools to help you quit smoking. Quitting smoking is a major step in lowering your risk for cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart and blood vessel disease. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the world. If you use tobacco, calling the Virginia Quitline can be the most important call you make. The Quitline offers free support from a Quit Coach®, Web Coach™ access through an online community, a plan to help you stop smoking and tools like nicotine patches. The Quitline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and is free and confidential. You can get started by calling **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)**.

- **Lower Sodium, Increase Potassium**

If you have high blood pressure, your doctor has probably told you to cut the amount of salt you eat. The American Heart Association says nearly 98% of Americans eat more than twice as much sodium as they should. High sodium raises blood pressure by increasing the amount of fluid in your blood. Potassium helps your heart by taking sodium out of your body. It also relaxes your blood vessels, which helps lower blood pressure. Foods high in potassium are important to any heart-healthy diet. If your blood

Sample Bulletin Health Announcements *continued...*

pressure is high, or you are at risk for high blood pressure, talk to your doctor about adding more potassium to your diet. However, you can start cutting sodium from your diet today.

- ✓ Read nutrition labels. Choose foods with 5% or less of the recommended daily value of sodium. Avoid foods with 20% or more.
- ✓ Track sodium in your food. Make sure you are eating less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day.
- ✓ Limit or avoid canned foods, processed foods, lunch meats and fast foods. These all have a high sodium content.
- ✓ Replace salt with salt-free seasonings when you cook.
- ✓ Add potassium-rich foods to your diet. These include potatoes and sweet potatoes, greens, mushrooms, lima beans, peas, bananas, tomatoes, oranges, melons, grapefruit, yogurt and raisins.

- **DASH Diet**

The DASH Diet is a meal plan that is low in saturated fat, cholesterol, total fat and sodium. DASH stands for "Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension (high blood pressure)". DASH focuses on eating fruits, vegetables and fat-free or low-fat milk. DASH also encourages people to eat whole grains, fish, poultry and nuts, while cutting red meat, sweets and sweetened drinks. Foods included in DASH can help lower blood pressure. These foods are rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, protein and fiber. DASH has been shown to help lower blood pressure within two weeks. You can find more on the DASH diet at <http://tiny.cc/7dnrax>. Be sure to talk to your doctor about whether this diet is right for you.

- **Living in the Stroke Belt**

The "stroke belt" is a group of states in the southeastern U.S. where strokes are most common. Virginia is a part of the stroke belt. Doctors are still studying why strokes happen more often here, although the region does have higher levels of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. All of these diseases can increase your risk of having a stroke.

It is important to know all of the warning signs of a stroke. These include sudden onset of any of these problems: numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg (especially on one side of the body); trouble speaking or understanding; trouble seeing in one or both eyes; trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance; severe headache with no known cause.

Sample Bulletin Health Announcements *continued...*

To help you decide if someone is having a stroke, use FAST:

- ✓ **F** – Face. If a person smiles, does one side of their face droop?
- ✓ **A** – Arms. When a person raises both arms, does one arm slouch downward?
- ✓ **S** – Speech. When a person repeats a simple phrase, is his or her speech slurred?
- ✓ **T** – Time. This is critical for treating a stroke. If you see any signs of stroke, call 911 immediately.

You can find more information on the symptoms and warning signs of a stroke at <http://tiny.cc/xworax>.

- **SuperTracker**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a tool called the SuperTracker on ChooseMyPlate.gov. SuperTracker helps you track food and exercise, set goals and manage your weight. SuperTracker also has a “Food-A-Pedia”, so you can find nutritional content and compare foods side by side. You can find these tools and more resources at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/SuperTracker/default.aspx.

- **MyPlate – Dietary Guidelines**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) must update the Dietary Guidelines for Americans every five years. The last change happened in 2010, and the USDA launched ChooseMyPlate.gov in 2011 to promote the new changes. The new guidelines and website focus on encouraging people to make smart choices in every food group. They also encourage people to balance diet with exercise, get more nutrition out of food and to watch how many calories they eat. These are all steps that are important to living a heart-healthy lifestyle. You can find all this information at www.choosemyplate.gov.

Additional bulletin examples can be found by visiting <http://tiny.cc/3yorax>.

Religious Messages that Support Your Health Ministry Mission

Christian Messages

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

Islamic Messages

Eat of the good things which We have provided for you (2:173). Eat of what is lawful and wholesome on earth (2:168).

And we have set down blessed rain from the sky and made grow thereby gardens and grain from the harvest (50: 9).

Jewish Messages

Deuteronomy 4:15

So take good care of your whole being.

Apocrypha of Ben Sira 30:16

There is no wealth like health.

Talmud, Berachot 54b

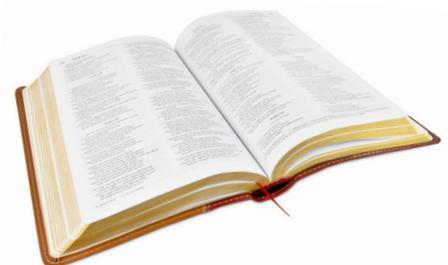
One who eats slowly lives long.

3 John 1:2

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

Deuteronomy 4:15

So take good care of your whole being.



The Health Benefits of Positive Thinking, Meditation & Prayer

Can positive thinking really improve your health? Can stress have a negative impact on your well-being? Can meditation and prayer help in healing? Researchers don't have all the answers for these questions, but many believe attitude and beliefs can make a difference in your health. Below are some links that you can use to learn more about positive thinking, meditation and prayer with your congregation.

According to the WebMD article, "Can Prayer Heal?", scientists have some surprising answers about the healing powers of prayer. The complete article can be accessed online at <http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/can-prayer-heal>, but here is an excerpt:

The Impact of Religion on Health:

"But prayer is more than just repetition and physiological responses," says Harold Koenig, MD, associate professor of medicine and psychiatry at Duke and a colleague of Krucoff's.

"Traditional religious beliefs have a variety of effects on personal health," says Koenig, senior author of the *Handbook of Religion and Health*, a new release that documents nearly 1,200 studies done on the effects of prayer on health.

These studies show that religious people tend to live healthier lives. "They're less likely to smoke, to drink, to drink and drive," he says. In fact, people who pray tend to get sick less often, as separate studies conducted at Duke, Dartmouth and Yale universities show. Some statistics from these studies:

- Hospitalized people who never attended church have an average stay of three times longer than people who attended regularly.
- Heart patients were 14 times more likely to die following surgery if they did not participate in a religion.
- Elderly people who never or rarely attended church had a stroke rate double that of people who attended regularly.
- In Israel, religious people had a 40% lower death rate from cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Other related articles include:

- "Positive thinking: Reduce stress by eliminating negative self-talk"
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/positive-thinking/SR00009>
- "Six Ways to Feel Happier, Be Healthier"
<http://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-05-2011/6-ways-to-feel-happier-be-healthier.html>

The Health Benefits of Positive Thinking, Meditation & Prayer *continued...*

- “Importance of Positive Attitude to Health”
<http://www.livestrong.com/article/126155-importance-positive-attitude-health/>
- “Examples of a Positive Attitude”
<http://www.livestrong.com/article/166436-examples-of-a-positive-attitude/>
- “Positive attitude towards life and emotional expression as personality phenotypes for centenarians”
<http://www.impactaging.com/papers/v4/n5/pdf/100456.pdf>
- “The Power of a Positive Attitude. Can Good Thoughts Lead to Good Health?”
<http://www.dchs.org/wireframes/contentlayout.aspx?id=1027>

Educational organizations focused on faith and health, from which additional information can be retrieved, include:

- The Interfaith Health Program (IHP) (<http://www.interfaithhealth.emory.edu/about/index.html>)

This program was launched in 1992 by Emory University Rollins School of Public Health following major national studies that identified the key role of faith groups in advancing the health of individuals and communities, particularly through prevention and health promotion.

IHP has worked with colleagues in the Faith and Health Consortium to create interdisciplinary academic working groups developing curriculum, research and service models. IHP also focuses on a small set of “Whole Community Collaboratives” where front line leaders are learning how to align the assets and strengths of faith and health at the community level. These initiatives link government, religious organizations, academic institutions, foundations and a wide variety of community partners.

- Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health (<http://www.spiritualityandhealth.duke.edu/>)

This center was founded in 1998 at Duke University, and is focused on conducting research, training others to conduct research and promoting scholarly field-building activities related to religion, spirituality and health. The Center serves as a clearinghouse for information on this topic, and seeks to support and encourage dialogue between researchers, clinicians, theologians, clergy and others interested in the intersection.

If you're interested in more information on building or sustaining a health ministry, visit <http://www.inova.org/inova-in-the-community/chp/resources/building-a-ministry> for additional tools and resources.

Resources - Blood Pressure

Step Up

If you are told by your doctor that you have high blood pressure (hypertension), visit step-up.vhqc.org to find tools and resources to achieve and maintain a lower blood pressure through lifestyle changes like eating healthy, getting active or quitting smoking. The website has invaluable information on such things as using herbs and spices to reduce sodium intake, how to take your blood pressure at home and providing a guide on lowering blood pressure.

Know Your Numbers

Blood pressure is the force of the blood against the walls of the arteries (blood vessels that carry blood away from the heart) and is recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio like this:

117
76 mm Hg

Read as "117 over 76 millimeters of mercury"

Systolic

The top number, which is also the higher of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (when the heart muscle contracts).

Diastolic

The bottom number, which is also the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle is resting between beats and refilling with blood).

What is the American Heart Association's recommendation for healthy blood pressure?

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm HG (upper #)		Diastolic mm HG (lower #)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	140-159	or	90-99
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (Emergency care needed)	Higher than 180	or	Higher than 110

At doctor visits, ask the nurse or doctor what your blood pressure numbers are and write them down. Also, write down your blood pressure numbers every time it gets checked at a health fair, a pharmacy or church health ministry event and share these with your doctor at your next appointment.

Resources - Blood Pressure

continued...

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute developed a blood pressure wallet card you can use to write down and keep track of your blood pressure numbers. You can find this wallet card online at: http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/Docs/BP_Toolkit/BP_Wallet_Card.pdf.

Alternatively, you can sign up for the American Heart Association's Heart360® program. Heart360® is a convenient and secure online location for you to track and manage your heart health, including logging in your blood pressure numbers. Record your health data with online trackers, access additional information and resources on how to be heart healthy, and even share your results with your provider. Visit www.heart360.org for more information.



Resources - Blood Pressure Medicine

When your blood pressure is 140 or higher for your systolic pressure (top number) OR 90 or higher for your diastolic pressure (bottom number), your doctor will likely prescribe medication and want you to make healthy lifestyle changes. You may need more than one type of prescription medication to keep your blood pressure at a healthy level. (Learn more about the different types of blood pressure medications here: <http://tinyurl.com/BPmeds>.)

Taking medicine may be new to you, and there may be a lot to remember. For example, why are you taking it? What time should you take it? How often do you take it and how many pills do you take? It's important to take medicine the right way — just as prescribed.

If you don't take medicine as directed, what could happen? First of all, it may not work. It could also cause side effects that may be mild — or very harmful. Without knowing it, you could counteract one medicine by taking it with another. Medicine can also make you feel sick or dizzy.

How can I remember to take my medicine?

- Take it at the same time every day.
- Take it along with other daily events, like brushing your teeth.
- Use special pill boxes that help you keep track, like the ones divided into sections for each day of the week (which can be found at a drugstore).
- Ask people close to you to help remind you.
- Keep a “medicine calendar” near your medicine and make a note every time you take your dose.
- Put a sticker or reminder note on your medicine cabinet or refrigerator.

Quick Tips for Medication Use

- Understand your medication. Know what it's for, and how and when you're supposed to take it.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether to take your medicine with food or on an empty stomach.
- Make an instruction sheet for yourself by taping a sample of each pill you take on a sheet of paper and writing down all the information about each pill to remind you.
- Get some colored labels and stick them on your medicine bottles to simplify your routine. For example, blue can be for morning, red for afternoon and yellow for bedtime.

Resources - Blood Pressure Medicine

continued...

- Ask your pharmacist to help you come up with a coding system for your medications that makes them easier to take.
- Purchase timer caps for pill bottles to remind you when to take medication.

Also:

- You can buy many types of pill containers. Some even beep when it's time to take medication. Ask your pharmacist about these aids.
- If your medication routine is too complicated, ask your physician or pharmacist to help you simplify the process; one example might be reducing the number of daily doses you need.
- If your medications are too expensive, ask your physician or pharmacist about finding financial assistance.
- If you're away from home often, make sure you carry enough medication with you to take the prescribed doses while you're out. Some pharmacists will prepare blister packs for daily or weekly medications. Ask your pharmacist about this.
- If you're using a commercial pill dispenser, set a regular time each week to refill it; for example, every Friday night after you eat.
- If you have trouble understanding your physician or pharmacist, ask a friend or loved one to go with you and help you.
- If you don't feel like your medication is making a difference, talk to your physician and ask why.
- Do not stop any medications without talking to your physician or healthcare provider.



Resources - Establishing a Church Garden

“Before You Eat The Church Food, Watch This Video”, Presented by the Association for Black Cardiologists

This 40-minute video is an invaluable resource for any church looking to help improve the health of its congregation. Visit www.beforeyoueatthechurchfood.com to watch the video and even order a copy of the DVD.

If feasible, starting a church garden might be a good way to begin the discussion within the health ministry about offering healthier foods at church. Building a church garden also provides an opportunity to get church members to work together to build a stronger church.

The **Virginia Cooperative Extension Service** has several guides for gardening. It also has articles on composting, controlling disease, insects and weeds, and information on growing fruits, nuts, vegetables and herbs. You can find all this information at www.ext.vt.edu, or you can contact your local extension office.

The **American Community Garden Association** also has tools to help with a church garden, including a fact sheet with items you should consider before planting. These include:

- Forming a planning committee
- Choosing a site
- Preparing and developing the site
- Organizing the garden
- Obtaining insurance
- Setting up a new gardening association
- Managing your community garden
- Troubleshooting

You can find the tip sheet at: <http://communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php>.

There is also a link for raised-bed gardening. This can be handy for churches that may not have a lot of space for a community garden. You can find that information at www.arfamilies.org/health_nutrition/agrability/gardening_raised_beds.pdf.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) update the Dietary Guidelines for Americans every five years. The last change happened in 2010, and the USDA launched ChooseMyPlate.gov in 2011 to promote the new changes. The new guidelines and website focus on encouraging people to make smart choices in every food group. They also encourage people to balance diet with exercise, get more nutrition out of food and to watch how many calories they eat. These are all steps that

Health Ministry Spotlight

Metro Baptist Church, New York City, NY

<http://tiny.cc/wsirax>

By utilizing community partnerships and untapped building space, this congregation in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of New York City has developed a small-scale rooftop vegetable farm known as the

Hell's Kitchen Farm Project.

Resources - Creating a Great Plate: 10 Tips to Get You There

are important to living a heart-healthy lifestyle.

To get started, visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>. There, you'll find the 10 Tips Nutrition Education Series. It shows you how to balance your plate for meals.

Use the ideas in this list to balance your calories, to choose foods to eat more often, and to cut back on foods to eat less often.

1. Balance your calories.

Find out how many calories you need for a day as a first step in managing your weight. Go to <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> to find your calorie level. Being physically active also helps you balance calories.

2. Enjoy your food, but eat less.

Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it. Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere may lead to overeating. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues and use them to recognize when to eat and when to stop eating.

3. Avoid oversized portions.

Use a smaller plate, bowl or glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish or take home part of your meal.

4. Four foods to eat more often – vegetables, fruits, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and dairy products.

These foods have the nutrients you need for health. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.

5. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Choose red, orange and dark green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes and broccoli, along with other vegetables, for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as a dessert.

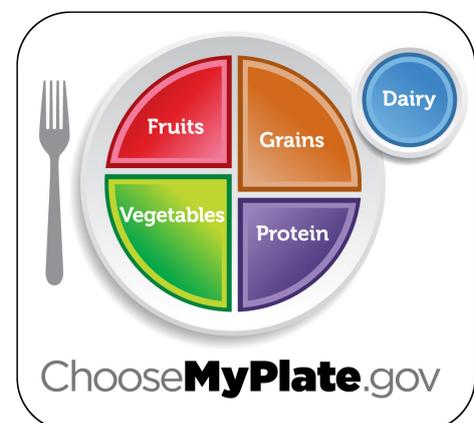
6. Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.

They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.

7. Make half your grains whole grains.

To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole grain product for a refined product, such as whole wheat bread instead of white bread, or brown rice instead of white rice.

8. Foods to eat less often – cakes, cookies, ice cream,



Resources - Creating a Great Plate: 10 Tips to Get You There

continued...

candy, sweetened drinks, pizza and fatty meats.

These foods are high in solid fats, added sugars and salt. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

9. Compare sodium in foods.

Look at the nutrition label and choose foods that are low in sodium, have reduced sodium or have no salt added.

10. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened drinks. Soda, energy drinks and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar and calories in American diets.

It's clear that Americans have a taste for salt, but salt plays a role in high blood pressure. Everyone, including kids, should reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day (about 1 teaspoon of salt). Adults age 51 and older, African-Americans of any age and individuals with high blood pressure, diabetes or chronic kidney disease should further reduce their sodium intake to 1,500 mg a day.



Resources - Salt and Sodium: 10 Tips to Help You Cut Back

1. Think fresh.

Most of the sodium Americans eat is found in processed foods. Eat highly processed foods less often and in smaller portions—especially cheesy foods, such as pizza; cured meats, such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and deli / luncheon meats; and ready-to-eat foods, like canned chili, ravioli and soups. Fresh foods are generally lower in sodium.

2. Enjoy home-prepared foods.

Cook more often at home—where you are in control of what's in your food. Preparing your own foods allows you to limit the amount of salt in them.

3. Fill up on veggies and fruits—they are naturally low in sodium.

Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits—fresh or frozen. Eat a vegetable or fruit at every meal.

4. Choose dairy and protein foods that are lower in sodium.

Choose more fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt in place of cheese, which is higher in sodium. Choose fresh beef, pork, poultry and seafood, rather than those with salt added. Deli or luncheon meats, sausages and canned products like corned beef are higher in sodium. Choose unsalted nuts and seeds.

5. Adjust your taste buds.

Cut back on salt little by little—and pay attention to the natural tastes of various foods. Your taste for salt will lessen over time.

6. Skip the salt.

Skip adding salt when cooking. Keep salt off the kitchen counter and the dinner table. Use spices, herbs, garlic, vinegar, or lemon juice to season foods or use no-salt seasoning mixes. Try black or red pepper, basil, curry, ginger or rosemary.

7. Read the label.

Read the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredients statement to find packaged and canned foods lower in sodium. Look for foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium” or “no salt added.”

8. Ask for low sodium foods when you eat out.

Restaurants may prepare lower sodium foods at your request and will serve sauces and salad dressings on the side so you can use less.

9. Pay attention to condiments.

Foods like soy sauce, ketchup, pickles, olives, salad dressings and seasoning packets are high in sodium. Choose low



Resources - Salt and Sodium: 10 Tips to Help You Cut Back

continued...

sodium soy sauce and ketchup. Have a carrot or celery stick instead of olives or pickles. Use only a sprinkling of flavoring packets instead of the entire packet.

10. Boost your potassium intake.

Choose foods with potassium, which may help lower your blood pressure. Potassium is found in vegetables and fruits, such as potatoes, beet greens, tomato juice and sauce, sweet potatoes, beans (white, lima, kidney) and bananas. Other sources of potassium include yogurt, clams, halibut, orange juice and milk.

It is possible to fit vegetables and fruits into any budget. Making nutritious choices does not have to hurt your wallet. Getting enough of these foods promotes health and can reduce your risk of certain diseases. There are many low cost ways to meet your fruit and vegetable needs.

1. Celebrate the season.

Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer's market is a great source of



Resources - Smart Shopping: 10 Tips for Affordable Vegetables and Fruits

seasonal produce.

2. Why pay full price?

Check the local newspaper, online and at the store for sales, coupons and specials that will cut food costs. Often, you can get more for less by visiting larger grocery stores (discount grocers if available).

3. Stick to your list.

Plan out your meals ahead of time and make a grocery list. You will save money by buying only what you need. Don't shop when you're hungry. Shopping after eating will make it easier to pass on the tempting snack foods. You'll have more of your food budget for vegetables and fruits.

4. Try canned or frozen.

Compare the price and the number of servings from fresh, canned and frozen forms of the same veggie or fruit. Canned and frozen items may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with "low sodium" or "no salt added" on the label.

5. Buy small amounts frequently.

Some fresh vegetables and fruits don't last long. Buy small amounts more often to ensure you can eat the foods without throwing any away.

6. Buy in bulk when items are on sale.

For fresh vegetables or fruits you use often, a large size bag is the better buy. Canned or frozen fruits or vegetables can be bought in large quantities when they are on sale since they last much longer.

7. Store brands = savings.

Opt for store brands when possible. You will get the same or similar product for a cheaper price. If your grocery store has a membership card, sign up for even more savings.

8. Keep it simple.

Buy vegetables and fruits in their simplest form. Pre-cut, pre-washed, ready-to-eat and processed foods are convenient, but often cost much more than when purchased in their basic forms.

9. Plant your own.

Start a garden—in the yard or a pot on the deck—for fresh, inexpensive, flavorful additions to meals. Herbs, cucumbers, peppers or tomatoes are good options for beginners. Browse through a local library or online for more information on starting a garden.

10. Plan and cook smart.

Prepare and freeze vegetable soups, stews or other dishes in advance. This saves

Resources - Smart Shopping: 10 Tips for Affordable Vegetables and Fruits

continued...

time and money. Add leftover vegetables to casseroles or blend them to make soup. Overripe fruit is great for smoothies or baking.

Visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more tips and information on healthy eating.

Does following a weight loss or healthy diet mean you must swear off fast food? Not necessarily. An occasional stop for fast food can fit into a healthy diet if you're careful about what you order.

These tips can help you make wise meal choices when going to a fast food restaurant:

- **Keep portion sizes small.**

If the fast food restaurant offers several sandwich sizes, pick the smallest. Don't order hamburgers with two or three beef patties, which can pack close to 800 calories and 40 grams of fat. Instead, choose a regular- or children's-sized hamburger, which has



Resources - Fast Food: A Guide from the Mayo Clinic

about 250 to 300 calories. Skip the large serving of french fries or onion rings and ask for a small serving instead. This switch alone saves 200 to 300 calories.

- **Choose healthier side dishes.**

Take advantage of the healthy side dishes offered at many fast food restaurants. For example, instead of french fries, choose a side salad with low fat dressing or a baked potato. Or add a fruit bowl or a fruit and yogurt option to your meal. Other healthy choices include apple or orange slices, corn on the cob, steamed rice or baked potato chips.

- **Go green.**

Choose an entree salad with grilled chicken, shrimp or vegetables with fat-free or low-fat dressing on the side, rather than regular salad dressing, which can have 100 to 200 calories a packet. Watch out for high calorie salads, such as those with deep fried shells or those topped with breaded chicken or other fried toppings. Also skip extras, such as cheese, bacon bits and croutons, which quickly increase your calorie count. If you don't use the salad dressing, you can find salads for around 300 calories at most fast food chains.

- **Opt for grilled items.**

Fried and breaded foods, such as crispy chicken sandwiches and breaded fish fillets, are high in fat and calories. Select grilled or roasted lean meats — such as turkey or chicken breast, lean ham or lean roast beef.

- **Watch what you drink.**

Many beverages are high in calories. For example, a large regular soda (32 ounces) has about 300 calories. Instead, order diet soda, water, unsweetened iced tea, sparkling water or mineral water. Also, skip the shakes and other ice cream drinks. Large shakes can contain more than 800 calories and all of your saturated fat allotment for the day.

- **Have it your way.**

Remember, you don't have to settle for what comes with your sandwich or meal — not even at fast food restaurants. Ask for healthier options and substitutions. And keep your eye on portion sizes.

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is rich in fruits, vegetables, fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, whole grains, fish, poultry, beans, seeds and nuts. Compared with the typical American diet, it contains less salt and sodium, sweets, added sugars and sugar-containing beverages, fats and red meats. This heart-healthy way of eating is also lower in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol and rich in nutrients that are associated with lowering blood pressure—mainly potassium, magnesium, calcium, protein and fiber.

The DASH eating plan requires no special foods and has no hard-to-follow recipes. It simply

Resources - Lowering Your Blood Pressure with the DASH Diet

calls for a certain number of daily servings from various food groups.

The number of servings depends on the number of calories you're allowed each day. Your calorie level depends on your age and, especially, how active you are. Think of this as an energy balance system—if you want to maintain your current weight, you should take in only as many calories as you burn by being physically active. If you need to lose weight, eat fewer calories than you burn or increase your activity level to burn more calories than you eat.

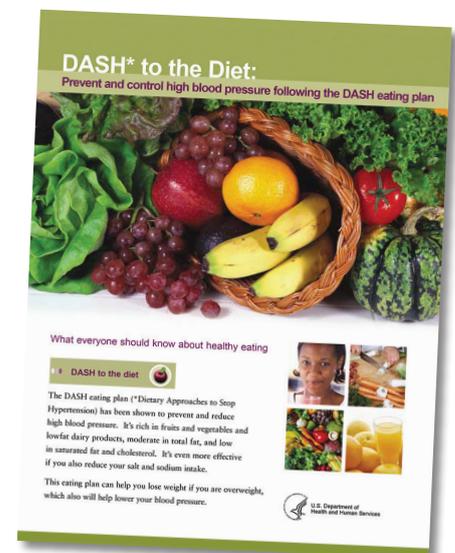
Making a Gradual Change

Making a change—even a small one— isn't always easy. And it takes time. Therefore, take a couple of days or weeks to give yourself time to become accustomed to the following changes being a part of your daily routine:

- Add a serving of vegetables at lunch one day and dinner the next, and add fruit at one meal or as a snack.
- Increase your use of fat-free and low-fat milk products to three servings a day.
- Limit lean meats to 6 ounces a day—3 ounces each portion, which is about the size of a deck of cards. If you usually eat large portions of meats, cut them back over a couple of days—by half or a third at each meal.
- Include two or more vegetarian-style or meatless meals each week.
- Increase servings of vegetables, brown rice, whole wheat pasta and cooked dry beans.
- For snacks and desserts, use fruits or other foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, sugar and calories—for example, unsalted rice cakes; unsalted nuts or seeds; raisins; graham crackers; fat-free, low-fat or frozen yogurt; popcorn with no salt or butter added; or raw vegetables.
- Use fresh, frozen or low sodium canned vegetables and fruits.
- Making other lifestyle changes, such as losing weight if needed and being physically active, while following the DASH eating plan is the best way to prevent and control high blood pressure.

DASH for Dining Out: Cut Back on Salt

- Ask that your food be prepared without added salt, MSG or salt-containing ingredients.
- Be alert for ingredients, cooking styles and labels that suggest an item may be high in salt. For example, watch out for foods that are pickled, cured or smoked or dishes that contain soy sauce or broth.



Resources - Lowering Your Blood Pressure with the DASH Diet

continued...

- Don't use the saltshaker.
- Limit condiments that are high in salt, such as mustard, ketchup, pickles and sauces.
- Opt for fruits and vegetables instead of salty appetizers.

DASH for Dining Out: Reduce Unhealthy Fats

- Ask that your food be prepared with olive oil, rather than butter or other less healthy fats.
- Request oil and vinegar rather than salad dressing, or request salad dressing on the side.
- Trim visible fat off meat and poultry. Eat only a portion that's about the size of a deck of cards since even very lean meat and poultry still contain fat.
- Select foods prepared with healthier cooking techniques, such as steaming, grilling, broiling, baking, roasting, poaching or stir-frying.
- Order fruit and steamed vegetables without butter or sauce.
- Choose steamed or broiled fish and ask for lemon and fresh herbs for seasonings.

More information on the DASH eating plan is available from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) website at www.nhlbi.nih.gov (under Health Information for the Public). Podcasts and Spanish-language articles also can be found in the online Diseases and Conditions Index at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/.

The Benefits of Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can help:

- Control your weight
- Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduce your risk of some cancers
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Improve your mental health and mood
- Improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls (if you're an older adult)
- Increase your chances of living longer

If you're not sure about becoming active or boosting your level of physical activity because

Resources - Physical Activity

you're afraid of getting hurt, the good news is that moderate-intensity aerobic activity, like brisk walking, is generally safe for most people.

Start slowly. Cardiac events, such as a heart attack, are rare during physical activity. But the risk does go up when you suddenly become much more active than usual. For example, you can put yourself at risk if you don't usually get much physical activity and then all of a sudden do vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, like shoveling snow. That's why it's important to start slowly and gradually increase your level of activity.

If you have a chronic health condition such as arthritis, diabetes or heart disease, talk with your doctor to find out if your condition limits, in any way, your ability to be active. Then, work with your doctor to come up with a physical activity plan that matches your abilities. If your condition stops you from meeting the minimum guidelines, try to do as much as you can. What's important is that you avoid being inactive. Even 60 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity is good for you.

The bottom line is the health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks of getting hurt.

Reduce Your Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

Heart disease and stroke are two of the leading causes of death in the U.S. But following the guidelines and getting at least 150 minutes a week (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity can put you at a lower risk for these diseases. You can reduce your risk even further with more physical activity. Regular physical activity can also lower your blood pressure and improve your cholesterol levels.

Getting Started with Physical Activity in Your Congregation

Use the Walking Group Toolkit (<http://step-up.vhqc.org/assets/mmc-walking-group-tool-kit-final-with-instructions.pdf>) to start a group at your faith-based organization.

In addition, "**Walk and Talk: A Health Ministry Guide**" (http://health.state.tn.us/dmhde/pdf/Walk_Talk.pdf) is another helpful tool in establishing a walking group at your faith-based organization. This guide includes tips, recommendations and workout log, as well as a congregational-sponsored 5k training schedule.

Local YMCAs are also great, affordable organizations to partner with and encourage congregational members to join. To find a list of your local YMCAs, visit www.ymca.net.

Some other excellent online resource related to physical activity include:

- **Be Active Your Way: A Guide for Adults** <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/adultguide.pdf>
- **2008 Physical Activity Guidelines** provides science-based guidance to help Americans

aged six and older improve their health through appropriate physical activity. Follow this link <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/default.aspx> to view, download or print the guidelines.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Cancer Institute, cigarette smoking increases your risk for developing and dying from several diseases, including cancer, heart disease and lung disease. Cigarette smoking is the #1 preventable cause of death in the U.S.

Smoking Facts

- Cardiovascular diseases account for one-third (33%; 128,500) of diseases attributed to smoking. An additional 46,000 deaths from ischemic heart disease are due to SHS (second-hand smoke) exposure.
- Smoking-related illnesses (e.g., lung cancer, cardiovascular disease) are the leading causes of death in the African-American community.
- In Virginia, non-Hispanic blacks die from heart disease, cerebrovascular disease (which can result in stroke) and lung and bronchus cancer at greater rates than non-Hispanic whites. Black males have especially high rates of deaths from these three diseases.
- In the U.S., an estimated \$96 billion are spent on medical care for smokers and former smokers suffering from diseases caused by smoking. This reflects costs over and above those that would be expected to occur among adults who never smoked. In Virginia, medical care costs for smokers and former smokers are \$2.08 billion each year.

Effects of Smoking on the Heart and Circulatory System

- Increases LDL (bad cholesterol) and decreases HDL (good cholesterol).
- Promotes atherosclerosis, or development of fatty plaques in the arteries.
- Increases levels of blood clotting factors (fibrinogen) in the blood vessels.
- Nicotine constricts blood vessels and decreases blood flow to vital organs.
- Carbon monoxide decreases the amount of oxygen that blood can carry.
- Increases heart rate which strains your heart.
- Increases blood pressure (hypertension), which can lead to damage to the heart, kidneys and other vital organs.
- Increases the risks of having a heart attack, stroke and congestive heart failure (when the heart can't pump enough blood to other organs).

Resources - Smoking Cessation

Resources for Quitting

Quit Now Virginia

The Virginia Department of Health's Quit Now Virginia is a free tobacco cessation phone counseling service that is provided to Virginia residents aged 13 and older, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Callers will receive one-on-one cessation counseling, information and self-help materials. Call toll-free: (800) QUIT-NOW / (800) 784-8669 or visit <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/tucp/quitNow.htm>

Tips from Former Smokers

This CDC-sponsored campaign features a variety of people, many of whom started smoking in their early teens, who are suffering from tobacco-related illnesses. By showing people whose lives have been tremendously impacted by the damage caused by smoking, CDC hopes to encourage smokers to quit, young people not to start and to strongly discourage smoking around children. For more information on the campaign, click <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/tucp/campaign.htm>

CDC Smoking Cessation Information

http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/cessation/quitting/index.htm

Be Tobacco Free

<http://betobaccofree.hhs.gov/>

Tobacco Use Control Project (TUCP)

For more information about tobacco use or tobacco use control, contact the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) TUCP at (804) 864-7877 or access information on their website at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/tucp/>

Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Project

For more information about cardiovascular disease and its prevention and control, contact the VDH's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Project at (804) 864-7877 or access information on their website at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/hdsp/>

Drinking too much alcohol can raise the levels of some fats in the blood (triglycerides). It can also lead to high blood pressure (hypertension), heart failure and an increased calorie intake. (Consuming too many calories can lead to obesity and a higher risk of developing diabetes.) Excessive drinking and binge drinking can lead to stroke. Other serious problems include fetal alcohol syndrome, cardiomyopathy, cardiac arrhythmia and sudden cardiac

death.

As people age, they may become more sensitive to alcohol's effects. The same amount of alcohol can have a greater effect on an older person than on someone who is younger. Over time, someone whose drinking habits haven't changed may find she or he has a problem.

The American Heart Association's Recommendations

If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. This means an average of one to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women. (A drink is one 12 oz. beer, 4 oz. of wine, 1.5 oz. of 80-proof spirits, or 1 oz. of 100-proof spirits.) Drinking more alcohol increases such dangers as alcoholism, high blood pressure, obesity, stroke, breast cancer, suicide and accidents. Also, it's not possible to predict in which people alcoholism will become a problem. Because of the risks, the American Heart Association cautions people to NOT start drinking if they do not already drink alcohol. Consult your doctor on the benefits and risks of consuming alcohol in moderation.

Alcohol and Aspirin

People who take aspirin regularly have a risk of stomach problems, including stomach bleeding. Alcohol use can increase these risks, so ask your doctor if you can safely drink alcohol in moderation.

Additional resources related to alcohol and health are below:

- **Alcoholics Anonymous**

Alcoholics Anonymous® (AA) is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; they are self-supporting through their own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, nor do they endorse or opposes any causes. Their primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. <http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=1>

For information on AA meetings in your area, visit the AA website at www.aa.org.



Resources - Alcohol and Heart Disease

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services**

When you call this toll-free number, a recorded message gives you the following choices: get a referral to local substance abuse treatment, speak with someone about substance abuse treatment and ask for printed material on alcohol or drugs. Phone: (800) 662-4357 (toll-free)

www.samhsa.gov

- **The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)**

The NIAAA is one of the 27 institutes and centers that comprise the National Institutes of Health (NIH). NIAAA supports and conducts research on the impact of alcohol use on human health and well-being. It is the largest funder of alcohol research in the world.

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>

- **Older Adults and Alcohol**

<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/olderAdults/olderAdults.htm>

Your congregation may include Medicare beneficiaries. Below is information on Medicare coverage for wellness visits and smoking cessation counseling.

Preventive Visit and Yearly Wellness Exams

How often is it covered?

Medicare Part B (medical insurance) covers:

- **A “Welcome to Medicare” Preventive Visit**

You can get this introductory visit only within the first 12 months you have Part B. This visit includes a review of your medical and social history related to your health and education and counseling about preventive services, including certain screenings, shots, and referrals for other care, if needed. It also includes:

- Height, weight and blood pressure measurements.
- A calculation of your body mass index.
- A simple vision test.
- A review of your potential risk for depression and your level of safety.
- An offer to talk with you about creating advance directives.
- A written plan letting you know which screenings, shots and other preventive services you need. Get details about coverage for screenings, shots, and other preventive services.

This visit is covered one time. You don't need to have this visit in order to be covered for yearly “Wellness” visits.

Resources - Alcohol and Heart Disease

continued...

- **Yearly “Wellness” Visits:**

If you've had Part B for longer than 12 months, you can get this visit to develop or update a personalized prevention help plan to prevent disease and disability based on your current health and risk factors. Your provider will ask you to fill out a questionnaire, called a “Health Risk Assessment,” as part of this visit. Answering these questions can help you and your provider develop a personalized prevention plan to help you stay healthy and get the most out of your visit. It also includes:

- A review of your medical and family history.
- Developing or updating a list of current providers and prescriptions.
- Height, weight, blood pressure and other routine measurements.
- Detection of any cognitive impairment.
- Personalized health advice.
- A list of risk factors and treatment options for you.
- A screening schedule (like a checklist) for appropriate preventive services. Get



Resources - Medicare Benefits

details about coverage for screenings, shots and other preventive services.

This visit is covered once every 12 months (11 full months must have passed since the last visit).

Who's Eligible?

All people with Medicare are covered.

Your Costs in Original Medicare

You pay nothing for the "Welcome to Medicare" preventive visit or the yearly "Wellness" visit if your doctor or other qualified health care provider accepts assignment. The Part B deductible doesn't apply. However, if your doctor or other health care provider performs additional tests or services during the same visit that aren't covered under these preventive benefits, you may have to pay coinsurance and the Part B deductible may apply.

Learn more: <http://medicare.gov/coverage/preventive-visit-and-yearly-wellness-exams.html>

Smoking and Tobacco Use Cessation (counseling to stop smoking or using tobacco products)

How often is it covered?

Medicare Part B (medical insurance) covers up to eight face-to-face visits in a 12-month period. These visits must be provided by a qualified doctor or other Medicare-recognized practitioner.

Who's eligible?

All people with Medicare who use tobacco are covered.

Your Costs in Original Medicare

You pay 20 percent of the Medicare-approved amount for the doctor's services, and the Part B deductible applies if you use tobacco and you've been diagnosed with an illness caused or complicated by tobacco use, or you take a medicine that's affected by tobacco. In a hospital outpatient setting, you also pay the hospital a copayment like a doctor's visit, hospital outpatient visit or prescription drug. A copayment is usually a set amount rather than a percentage. For example, you might pay \$10 or \$20 for a doctor's visit or prescription.

If you haven't been diagnosed with an illness caused or complicated by tobacco use, you pay nothing for the counseling sessions if the doctor or other health care provider accepts assignment.

Learn more: <http://www.medicare.gov/coverage/smoking-and-tobacco-use-cessation.html>

Resources - Medicare Benefits

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Virginia Health Quality Center (VHQC)

VHQC can help your congregation by providing educational materials and resources to support healthier lifestyle choices. These tools will help improve the heart health of your community and teach people how to more effectively take care of their own health. Some of the ways VHQC can work with your ministry include:

- Helping you start or strengthen a health ministry program.
- Working with your health ministry to provide free teaching materials that engage your congregation in a heart healthy lifestyle.
- Working with Medicare patients in your community to improve heart health.
- Teaching members the importance of taking all of their medications.

Virginia Department of Health

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) offers many tools for Virginians. VDH talks about its mission and goals on its home page for heart disease and stroke prevention. It also provides links to heart health numbers from around the state and facts about heart disease and stroke. You can find this information and more at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/hdsp/>.

VDH also provides support for people who want to quit smoking. You can find this information at: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/tucp/>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website has information about living a healthy lifestyle (www.cdc.gov/HealthyLiving/). Here, you can find information about heart health, including topics like keeping a healthy weight, heart disease, high blood pressure, nutrition, obesity, smoking and preventing strokes. This site also includes a tool called Disease & Conditions Features, which gives monthly updates on topics like heart disease (www.cdc.gov/Features/DiseasesConditions.html).

American Heart Association

The American Heart Association's website has information about heart disease and stroke. You can find information about staying heart healthy and special information for caregivers, health care providers and teachers at www.heart.org/HEARTORG/.

You can also find information about preventing strokes at www.strokeassociation.org/.

If you or a church member is a heart patient, the American Heart Association has a site for patient information and tools. You can find it at www.hearhub.org/.

Resources - Helpful Organizations and Additional Resources

Association of Black Cardiologists

The Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) was founded in 1974 to bring special attention to the adverse impact of cardiovascular disease on African-Americans. They are an inclusive organization, with membership open to everyone who is interested in assuring that African-American children know their grandparents and are on the way to becoming “great” grandparents themselves. The mission of ABC is to champion the elimination of cardiovascular disparities through education, research and advocacy. Their website can be found at <http://abc cardio.org/index.php> and contains information about cardiovascular disease, educational resources and events.

The ABC toolkit, 7 Steps to a Healthy Heart, located at <http://www.abc-patient.com/7Steps/index.html> is an interactive, multiple format toolkit that contains handouts, videos and learning checks. You can either read the information in the toolkit or listen to it. The purpose of the toolkit is to change health outcomes by improving cardiovascular education and screenings.

National High Blood Pressure Education Program

The National High Blood Pressure Education Program (NHBPEP), established in 1972, is a cooperative effort among professional and voluntary health agencies, state health departments and many community groups. The NHBPEP is administered and coordinated by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). The goal of the NHBPEP is to reduce death and disability related to high blood pressure through programs of professional, patient and public education. Visit <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/nhbpep/index.htm> for education and resource tools.

National Institute on Aging Information Center

This senior-friendly website from the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine has health and wellness information for older adults. Special features make it simple to use. For example, you can click on a button to hear the text read out loud or to make the type larger.

P.O. Box 8057

Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8057

Phone: (800) 222-2225 (toll-free)

TTY: (800) 222-4225 (toll-free)

Website: www.nia.nih.gov/health

Resources - Helpful Organizations and Additional Resources

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United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- Choose My Plate: The USDA has many educational tools and resources on its Choose My Plate website. It is designed to encourage healthy eating for Americans. You can find this information at www.choosemyplate.gov.
- Super Tracker Tool: This USDA tool is also available on the Choose My Plate website. It helps you track what you eat, your physical activity, your weight loss and your goals. You can find the Super Tracker tool at www.choosemyplate.gov/SuperTracker/default.aspx.
- 10 Tips Educational Series: This gives tips that are easy to follow and can be printed for handouts or to post on bulletin boards. The tips are a starting point for people who want to start eating a healthier diet. You can find the 10 Tips series at www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html.

How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label

This is a website from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that thoroughly explains how to read food nutrition labels and is intended to make it easier for you to use nutrition labels to make quick, informed food choices that contribute to a healthy diet. The website is located at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm274593.htm>.

Recipe Finder

Search over 600 recipes submitted by nutrition and health professionals and organizations. The recipes can be searched by ingredient, recipe name, audiences, cooking equipment, menu items, themes, topics or price. Recipes provide several print-friendly options including full page, large font and recipe card style layouts. The site also provides a new “Build a Cookbook” option. Use this feature to create a personalized cookbook by adding recipes selected from the Recipe Finder database or from the categories provided. This tool can be found on the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service website at <http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>.

Healthy Dining Finder

This searchable internet database was born out of a passion to find menu choices with vibrant fruits and vegetables, hearty whole grains and flavorful lean proteins at every restaurant. For over 20 years, Healthy Dining has worked closely with national organizations, federal, state and local government, high profile private companies, nationwide networks of public health professionals and dietitians, as well as the national and state restaurant associations, to make the most enticing choices at restaurants also some of the healthiest. Visit <http://www.healthydiningfinder.com/home.aspx> to search for restaurants with healthy food options.

Resources - Helpful Organizations and Additional Resources

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Building a Church Garden

The American Community Garden Association (ACGA) has information about factors you should consider before starting a community garden. You can find this tip sheet at www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php.

The Virginia Cooperative Extension Service has several guides for gardening. It also has articles on composting, controlling disease, insects and weeds and information on growing fruits, nuts, vegetables and herbs. You can find all this information at www.ext.vt.edu,

There is also a link for raised-bed gardening. This can be handy for churches that may not have a lot of space for a community garden. You can find that information at: www.arfamilies.org/health_nutrition/agrability/gardening_raised_beds.pdf.

Contact Information

Bless Your Heart has been provided as a free resource to help your church create or strengthen its health ministry. If you have any questions or would like more information about this and other available resources, please feel free to contact:

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804.864.7456

Erica Taylor
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410.786.4086

Thank you for helping to make your congregation—and your community—heart healthy.

Follow us on:

facebook.com/vdhomhhe | twitter.com/vahealthequity | vdh.virginia.gov/OMHHE



Additional Partner: American Heart Association

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