

February 2015

Heart Health

When it comes to women's health, most of us worry about breast cancer. While this is something all women should be screened for, would it surprise you to learn that 5 times more women die of heart disease than of breast cancer? In fact, in the US heart disease is the number one killer of women.

The most common cause of heart disease is coronary artery disease (CAD). This is when plaque builds up along the walls of the arteries carrying blood from the heart causing them to narrow and harden. This could lead to clots which could then block blood flow to the heart causing a heart attack.

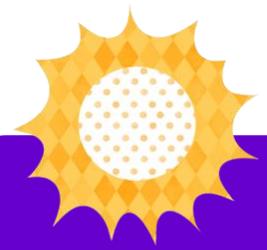
So what can you do to help prevent or manage CAD once diagnosed?

- ❖ **Exercise!** Staying active can lower your risk of an early death from heart disease and stroke. Plus it boosts your mood and has many other health benefits.*
- ❖ **Eat Healthy-** Eating fatty foods not only helps you put on weight but it has a direct effect on your arteries, blood pressure, and sugar levels. Make sure to add fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy, fish, beans, nuts, and lean meats* to your diet. Stay away from foods high in saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugar. If you enjoy your occasional drink, make sure to keep it to one drink a day.
- ❖ **Know Your Numbers-** Make sure that you have lab work done that checks for cholesterol (total, LDL, HDL, and triglycerides) and blood sugar. These basic tests will tell you and your health care team a lot about your heart health.

And most importantly...

- ❖ **Take Care of Yourself-** Many of you are still raising children, helping raise grandchildren, or caring for aging parents. Stress, anxiety, depression, and lack of sleep have all been linked to heart disease. Couple that with symptoms of menopause and you may feel like you can never catch a break. It is important to take time to yourself and relax. Make sure to get the appropriate amount of sleep each day. If you're having symptoms of depression please speak with your doctor or a therapist who can help. Remember, you can not help others if you are not taking care of yourself first.

(Information for this Newsletter can be found at www.womenshealth.gov)



Important Dates

2/28 Heart Health Event

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Menopause and Sleep

*Exercise: Please see the section in our websites regarding intensity and duration of exercise.

www.miami.va.gov/menopause/Lifestyle

*Lean Meats: skinless white meat chicken and turkey; beef cuts such as tenderloin, top loin, sirloin tip, and ground round; pork and lamb products such as center loin and tenderloins are all lean meats.

Meet the Staff

Irene Bahta, MD



Dr. Irene Bahta received her medical degree from the University of Santo Tomas in 1989 and completed her residency at St. Luke's Medical Center in Cleveland, OH, in 1993. She is a board certified internist and, after over 20 years working as a primary care physician, Dr. Bahta was thrilled to bring her passion for women's healthcare to the Veteran's Administration. She has been with the

VA for nearly five years and feels it is a privilege to serve veterans. She enjoys providing emotional support and advice to women veterans on a variety of topics such as menopause, contraception, and infertility. For these reasons she immensely enjoys working with our veterans to improve their health using current and updated standards.



Resources

www.goredforwomen.org/

American Heart Association's women's page. Here you can learn more about heart disease, learn your risks, find tips, and read stories.

http://72.32.26.93/hcu/locale/en_US/main_en_US.html

American Heart Association's risk calculator. Remember to have your cholesterol numbers handy in order to take this assessment.

www.move.va.gov/

The VA's national weight management program designed to help Veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health.

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Leah Marcovitz, ARNP

Leah Marcovitz received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Massachusetts in 1997. The following year, she received her Master of Science in Nursing from Vanderbilt University. After working for a clinic in Oklahoma City, OK, that provided care to underserved populations, she



joined the Miami VA Healthcare System in 2002. Leah currently works at the Hollywood CBOC and enjoys the opportunity to educate our women veterans on the importance of preventative health care, good health habits, and chronic medical conditions women face today.