

GET HEALTHIER DURING AMERICAN HEART MONTH WITH MERIT HEALTH'S 28-DAY HEALTHY HEART CHALLENGE

Jackson, MS (Feb. 1, 2023) – Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States, claiming the lives of more than 650,000 people each year. Here are some other facts everyone should know about heart disease:

- In the U.S., one person dies every 34 seconds from cardiovascular disease.
- Every year, about 800,000 Americans suffer a heart attack.
- Nearly half of American adults (47%) suffer from high blood pressure, or hypertension, which increases the risk of a heart attack and stroke. However, only about 1 in 4 people with high blood pressure have their condition under control.

Another important fact is that most people can take steps right now to reduce the risks related to heart disease.

In most cases, heart disease is preventable. Erica Bertschler, CFNP, a Merit Health provider tells us, “By adopting a healthy lifestyle, including not smoking, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar and cholesterol and treating high blood pressure, we can all reduce our risk for heart disease.”

Since 1964, February has been recognized as American Heart Month – a time of year dedicated to increasing awareness about heart health and highlighting steps we can take to create a heart healthy lifestyle.

This year, Merit Health is taking the entire month of February to help people in the community learn ways to reduce their risks with the **28-Day Healthy Heart Challenge**. Participants will receive a daily email with short, informative articles, quick tips, and a daily challenge to promote heart health.

“At Merit Health, we are committed to helping people live healthier and, for most of us, there’s no better place to start than taking better care of our hearts,” says Greg Oden, Merit Health Chief Medical Officer. “People who join us for this challenge will find the content takes only a couple of minutes to read each day. It is fun, sometimes surprising, always informative, and it can be life-saving. I hope everyone will sign up for the challenge and join us on a 28 day journey to a healthier heart.”

The 28-Day Healthy Heart Challenge includes 28 challenges that can help participants eat healthier, get up from a sedentary lifestyle, relieve stress and lower blood pressure. To sign-up for the 28-Day Healthy Heart Challenge, visit MyMeritHealth.com.

About Merit Health

Merit Health serves the healthcare needs of residents of Mississippi through its 9 affiliated hospitals. The healthcare system offers a wide array of services including orthopedics, cardiology, women’s health, emergency departments and broad diagnostic medical and surgical services. The network has more than 1,800 licensed beds, more than 2,500 physicians on the combined active medical staffs, more than 3,000 employees, more than 40,000 admissions and more than 250,000 emergency department visits each year.

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