



PETER CHRISTENSEN
HEALTH CENTER

COMPREHENSIVE CARE
PROVIDING CARE TO THE LAC DU FLAMBEAU COMMUNITY, VILAS, ONEIDA, AND IRON COUNTIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE February 14, 2023

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February Is Heart Health Month: Heart Disease Leading Cause of Death In Men & Women *Peter Christensen Health Center's Dr. Roberts: 'Know Your Risk Factors For Heart Disease'*

LAC DU FLAMBEAU—Heart disease accounts for 1 in 5 deaths in the United States. High blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors for heart disease. About half of people in the United States (47%) have at least one of these three risk factors, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Several other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can also put people at a higher risk for heart disease, including diabetes, excessive weight, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and excessive alcohol use.

“Progress rather than perfection is key to making gains on a healthy heart,” says Peter Christensen Health Center’s Dr. Amy Roberts, who’s speaking out to help educate people during Heart Health Month. “Often people are overwhelmed by health information overload, making it difficult to know where to start or what to believe.”

Dr. Roberts recommends talking with your healthcare team who stay up to date on the latest heart health information. She says healthcare professionals can offer proven insights so patients can confidently make changes to improve their heart health.

“Behavior change is hard,” Dr. Roberts says. “It’s hard to know what information to trust. Healthcare providers have one agenda and that’s to help patients with their health. Lean on us to help create a plan that makes it easier to take that first step.”

Insights On Heart Health

- **Progress rather than perfection is key to improving heart health.** Ask your healthcare team for easy first steps and life hacks you can use. There are small actions you can take, with proper support, to help make the changes required to improve heart health.
- **Smoking Cessation.** Many have tried and failed to quit smoking. Your healthcare team can help you understand where to start with smoking cessation, and even determine if you are ready to quit, and what tools are available to help you quit.
- **Exercise.** Small bursts of physical activity can help with heart health. Regular exercise or activity often is easier if you pick something you enjoy and do it with a friend. A great first step to take on your own could be parking farther from the grocery or making all the beds in the house.
- **Body weight.** Obtaining and maintaining a healthy body weight takes stress off your heart. A combination of healthier food choices and regular exercise reduces body weight. Your body is a machine. The more fuel or food you put into it, the more activity it takes to burn off that fuel. Overtime, even small changes in diet and exercise adds up to a healthier heart.
- **Sleep.** Proper rest is a huge component of heart health and overall health. For example, if you have poor sleep because of sleep apnea, over time it places extra stress on the heart. Many who get treated for sleep apnea feel more energetic and fresh. It’s worth talking to your healthcare team about getting more rest, and how it can help your heart and other areas of your life.

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- **Blood pressure.** Get your blood pressure checked. This is a great reason to see your doctor annually. The link between high blood pressure and heart health are proven.
- **Food choices.** Look for small wins. Maybe try shopping for and preparing healthier meals one day a week. Drink an extra bottle of water each day. Add one serving of vegetables or fruit to your diet each day. If you normally eat two cheese burgers, eat only one. Try eating high fiber-foods that keep you feeling fuller longer. Work with your healthcare team to design a nutrition plan.
- **Medicines.** There are medicines out there to help with heart health issues. This is best customized to the individual person and their particular history and chronic conditions.

Peter Christensen Health Center, an AAAHC accredited healthcare provider, meets community members needs through coordinated, patient-centered, comprehensive health and wellness service that includes education, collaboration and patient sensitivity. Visit PCHClinic.com.

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