

Native American Health Messenger

Your Wellness Connection
Phoenix Indian Medical Center

March/April 2005

Heart Disease: a Growing Problem in Our Community

Did you know that more Native Americans die from heart disease than from any other cause? Heart attacks and strokes kill more than one out of every four people who die in Indian Country.

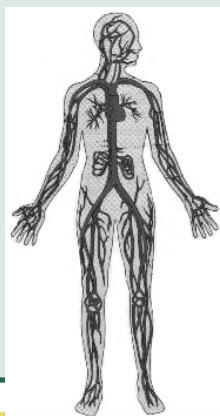
We used to think that more men than women had heart attacks. But, today we know that heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in Native American communities.

The good news is that heart disease is usually preventable. Prevention must start early in life. We can help ourselves and help others in our family and in our community to prevent heart disease.

The first thing we can do is to learn more about our heart. The heart is an amazing organ!

Our heart is the center of our body. Every minute, it pumps 5 quarts of blood through our blood vessels. The heart sends the blood through our lungs to pick up oxygen to take to all the parts of our body.

Our heart never stops working. It beats about 100,000 times a day. It takes a strong muscle to do this work. We strengthen our heart through exercise. Physical activity that



makes our heart beat faster actually makes our heart stronger.

Like water flowing through a stream to bring life to our world, the blood must flow freely through our body. Our heart, our lungs, and our blood all work together to sustain our life. We call the diseases of our heart and blood vessels "cardiovascular disease" or CVD. The most common CVD is coronary heart disease, which can cause heart attacks, strokes, and the chest pain called "angina."

Heart disease develops over a long time. The blood vessels get clogged with deposits of a waxy substance called cholesterol. A heart attack happens when an artery becomes blocked, preventing oxygen and nutrients from getting to the heart. Stroke results when a blood clot blocks the blood to the brain, or from bleeding in the brain.

In future issues of this newsletter, we will talk about a number of things you can do to prevent heart disease. In this issue, we present information on heart emergencies.

Did You Know. . . Amputation in Persons with Diabetes is Preventable?

Persons with diabetes are at high risk for infections because of high blood sugar, poor circulation, and loss of feeling in their feet. Good foot care can prevent serious infections that lead to amputation. Good foot care includes the following: (1) maintaining control of your blood sugar, (2) washing and drying feet thoroughly, daily, (3) wearing comfortable, sturdy shoes (preferably with leather tops to allow for ventilation), (4) wearing clean, dry socks, (5) examining the tops, sides, and bottom of feet, daily, looking for blisters, ingrown nails, cuts, or sores of any kind, (6) seeing your healthcare provider right away if you find any sore, and (7) working closely with your health care provider if you do have an infection. There are many things that your health care provider can do to help you save your feet. Don't wait until it's too late!

AIDS Virus Becoming Resistant

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). When AIDS was first discovered around 1980, there were no treatments, and death was almost certain. With years of scientific research, the virus (HIV) was discovered and numerous drugs were found that slow down the progression of disease, reduce symptoms, and lengthen life. Unfortunately, over the years, bacteria and viruses can develop an immunity to drugs that once might have killed them. Recently, in New York, two cases of AIDS were diagnosed that are resistant to the drugs now used to treat AIDS. This is important to us in Arizona because people with drug-resistant AIDS can move around the country infecting others with their virus. *What can you and I do to protect ourselves?* The answer is simple: practice safe sex! Learn to use condoms correctly; use them every time you have sex. Stay in a monogamous relationship (only one partner for each of you). Alcohol and drugs affect common sense, making people do things they normally wouldn't do (don't drink or do drugs). Talk with your health care provider for more ideas.

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The *Native American Health Messenger* is published monthly by the Phoenix Indian Medical Center Office of Planning. Please contact Roberta Arthur, Public Relations, at 602-263-1576 or e-mail at roberta.arthur@mail.ihs.gov if you wish to submit articles for publication, suggest topics to be covered in future issues, or for more information about the services, programs, and field initiatives of the hospital. Or, you may write: Phoenix Indian Medical Center, Administration/Planning, 4212 North 16th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85016.

National Native American Youth Initiative

June 18-26, 2005, Washington DC.

The Association of American Indian Physicians (AAIP) is now accepting applications for this week long event. Scholarships to attend will be awarded to more than 60 Native American high school students age 16-18 with a grade point average of 2.5 or higher. This is a tremendous opportunity for Native high school students interested in pursuing a career in health. It is designed to prepare students for admission to college and professional schools, as well as for careers in health and biomedical research.

Applications are due May 13, 2005. For more information, contact Russ Tall Chief, at AAIP at 405-946-7072 or e-mail aaip@aaip.com

Resources

Phoenix Dine General Meetings, held at the Phoenix Indian Center, 2601 North 3rd Street, #100, Phoenix. Meetings are on the 2nd Saturday of every month and start at 9 am. Meetings are open to the community and are hosted potluck style. Call 602-263-1017.

Skill Building for Indian Parents, sponsored by American Indian Family and Youth Services. Classes are once a week for four weeks, and are repeated monthly. For more information, call 602-264-0728 or 602-487-0119.

Breastfeeding classes at PIMC the second Thursday of every month from 5:00 to 6:30 pm.

Stop Smoking Classes at PIMC. For more information, call 602-640-2882 X110.

Sweat Lodge behind PIMC held on the last Friday of every month at sundown for men, and the last Thursday of every month for women.

Talking Circle in PIMC Conference Rooms A and B. Conducted by Native American Connections every Wednesday evening at 7 pm.

Pueblo Grande Museum and Archeological Park has many interesting activities each month, including lectures, tours, hikes, classes for children, and workshops. For more information, call 602-495-0901 or check them out on the web at www.pueblogrande.com

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mar 23. **Memorial in Honor of Lori Ann Piestewa.** Sunrise Ceremony, Piestewa Peak, Hopi Ramada (2nd to last Ramada, Phoenix, 6:30 am

Mar 23. **Evening Candlelight Memorial,** Patriots Square Park, Central Ave and Washington, Phoenix; 5:30 pm. A tribute to Lori Ann Piestewa and all our veterans, including Jessica Lynch, Shoshana Johnson. For more info call Ernest Martinez at 602-312-8663 or Liz Gonzales at 602-228-3208.

Mar 25. **Drug-Free Weekend and Easter Egg Hunt,** PIMC front patio. 10 am -12 noon.

Mar 25-26. **Univ of Arizona Wildcat Pow Wow,** Bear Down Field, Tucson. Admission: Adults \$5; students 18 and under and military \$3; elders 55+ Free. Gourd dancing Friday 5 pm and Saturday 11 am to 5 pm; Grand Entry Friday 7 pm and Saturday 1 pm and 7 pm. No alcohol, no drugs, no guns.

Apr 2. **Phoenix Indian Center Annual Gala and Art Auction.** Individual tickets \$150. Call 602-448-5959 or visit www.phxindcenter.org

Apr 2. **The SERAI Music Festival II,** benefit for the American Indian Veterans Memorial Fund, American Legion Hall, Holbrook, AZ. Features the music of Here Lies Treachery, Ikonoklast, Ethnic Degeneration, Keddah, Mankind is Obsolete, and more. More info at www.dineunderground.com

Apr 2-6. **Heard Museum Native American Student Art Show and Sale,** Heard Museum, Phoenix. Call 602-251-0255.

April 7. **Native Parenting Class.** "Keeping the Culture Alive." 10 am to 12 noon; Building 1, Library conference Room (south east corner of campus).

Apr 8-9. **Dine College Pow Wow,** Dine College, Tsale, AZ. Visit www.dinecollege.edu

May 5. **Native Parenting Class.** "Grandparents as Parents." 10 am to 12 noon; Building 1, Library conference Room (south east corner of campus).

May 11. **Native Parenting Class.** "Effective Discipline for Children 2-10." 10 am to 12 noon; Building 1, Library conference Room (south east corner of campus).

Know Your Risk for Heart Disease

There is not just one thing that causes heart disease. Scientists have found several causes. These are called "risk factors."

The more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to have a heart attack or stroke. These risk factors are:

- Diabetes
- Cigarette smoking
- High blood cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Overweight
- Physical inactivity
- Your age (older than 45 years old)
- Family history of early heart disease

Some risk factors are outside of your control. You cannot change your age, for example. Also, some people are born with certain risk factors. We know that heart disease "runs in some families." People in those families are more likely to have heart disease.

But, we can control most risk factors. We can increase our physical activity and reduce our weight. Both high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure can often be controlled through lifestyle changes and with medicine. We can choose not to smoke cigarettes or to stop smoking.

When you have risk factors that you cannot control, like being older than 45 or being born into a family with a history of heart disease, it is especially important to take charge of those risks that you **can** control.

Diabetes is right up there at the top of the list of risk factors. For many people, heart disease is a complication of diabetes. You can also have heart disease without having diabetes. The good news is that what you do to prevent heart disease also helps you prevent diabetes (as well as cancer and other serious illnesses). And, when you are making lifestyle changes to prevent or control diabetes, you are also reducing your risks of heart disease.

It is this simple: You can reduce your risk of heart disease by having a healthy lifestyle.



Letter from the Director

The Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC) makes it a priority to ask our patients and other community members their views of the programs and services we offer. We do this regularly through anonymous satisfaction surveys conducted quarterly. Your satisfaction with the performance of PIMC health care providers, the services, and facility issues are reviewed by both the Governing Board and by management staff.

Survey results and feedback from our tribal partners have resulted in the creation of new programs such as orthopedics, acupuncture, and pain management. Feedback from the community is also the basis for the new health care facilities that are planned for the southeast and southwest valley, and hopefully, a new hospital and new clinic in the east valley.

As in the past, the FY 2004 and 2005 survey results show dissatisfaction with waiting times, the ability to schedule appointments, and facility cleanliness. Many of these problems directly relate to the age of the facility and to the availability of relatively fixed resources. However, we can always improve! I value your help in identifying ways that we can provide you with a positive health care experience. Please feel free to request a copy of the 2004 PIMC Patient Satisfaction Survey results from the Office of Planning at 602-263-1612.

My best to you and your family throughout the year and have a wonderful Easter Holiday!

Dr. John Meeth, PIMC CEO

For Kids Only!

Do you know what an emergency is? An emergency is whenever someone's life is in danger. Examples include (1) a house fire, (2) someone with a gun pointing it at another person or animal, (3) a person with diabetes who is unconscious (you can't wake him up), (4) someone having seizures (lying on the ground shaking uncontrollably), (5) someone is bleeding a lot, and (6) someone with chest pain and difficulty breathing. These are just a few examples of an emergency!

Do you know what to do in an emergency? (1) In the case of a house fire, shout "Fire," and get out of the house. Go to a phone and call 9-1-1. (2) If someone has a gun and is waving it around or playing with it or pointing it at someone, leave. Find a phone and call 9-1-1. (3) When someone is ill and unable to talk to you, find a grown up to help, and then call 9-1-1. (4) If someone is bleeding a lot, get someone to help, and then call 9-1-1. (5) If someone has stopped breathing, find a grownup to help, then call 9-1-1. If that grownup or you know how to do CPR, start doing it.

You never know when an emergency will happen. It's good to know, before an emergency happens, what you can do to help. Talk with your parents and teachers about what to do in emergencies. The more you know, the more helpful you can be.



Recognizing a Heart Attack

What is a heart attack? The heart pumps blood throughout the entire body. It even pumps blood through its own arteries to keep itself alive and healthy. Heart disease, which can lead to a heart attack, develops over a long period of time as fatty deposits build up on the inside of the heart's arteries. This fatty buildup causes the arteries to narrow and, then, not enough blood can get to the heart muscle.

When one or more heart arteries become nearly or completely blocked, usually by a clot, blood flow is closed off and a heart attack begins. If this continues, part of the heart muscle will die.

Signs of heart attack. These are the signs most often reported by heart attack victims, *both* men and women:

Your chest hurts or feels squeezed. Most heart attacks have some kind of discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. It can range from mild to severe.

Discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach.

Shortness of breath. You may feel like you can't breathe or catch your breath.

Breaking out in a cold sweat. People having a heart attack can also break out in a cold sweat.

Nausea. Some heart attack patients feel or get sick to their stomach.

Light-headedness. People having a heart attack may also feel light-headed (or dizzy).

Whether you are a man or woman, you do not need to have all of the signs mentioned to be having a heart attack.

What to do. If you, or someone you are with, has any of these signs of heart attack, a call should be made to 9-1-1, immediately. The faster treatment is started the more likely the heart will survive. Emergency medical staff, responding to your 9-1-1 call, will have equipment, oxygen, and medicine available. They will consider your symptoms and evaluate your condition to determine what to do for you. In addition, information can be sent to doctors in the emergency room, allowing them to be ready for you when you arrive.