

## MESSAGES FOR CONSUMERS OR PATIENT GROUPS

**You can reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke—and lead a longer, healthier life.**

- **The first step to reducing your risk for heart disease and stroke is to know your ABCS:**
  - **Appropriate Aspirin Use:** Ask your doctor if aspirin will reduce your risk for heart attacks.
  - **Blood Pressure Control:** You can control your blood pressure and reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke.
  - **Cholesterol Management:** Your health care professional has advice to help you lower your cholesterol levels if they're high.
  - **Smoking Cessation:** Ask your health care professional to connect you with tools to help you quit smoking.
- **Smoking doesn't just kill, it also leads to long-term disability and dependence on others.** The good news is that it's never too late to quit.
  - Smoking can lead to heart attack or stroke and steals an average of 13-14 years of your life.
  - Once you stop smoking, your risk for heart attack and stroke declines each year.
  - There are resources to help you quit. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.
- **When it comes to your blood pressure, you are in control.**
  - You can monitor your blood pressure safely at home, at many pharmacies, and at your doctor's office.
  - Work with a health care professional to take your medications as prescribed.
- **Take the Million Hearts™ pledge:** <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov>. **Make a commitment to saving your life.**
  - Use the My Life Check tool to assess your current cardiovascular health.

- Know and follow the ABCS.
- Get active and maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a heart healthy diet that is low in sodium and doesn't include trans fat.
- Follow your doctor's advice.

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