

In health and in life, the little things are the big things.



Big milestones and achievements often get the glory, but when it comes to a healthy life, it's the little things that count—especially when they last a lifetime. For example, you don't have to run a marathon to get healthy: Walking even 10 minutes a day on most days of the year will lead to all kinds of healthy returns over time. Likewise, health professionals can encourage people to make small, daily changes by supporting tobacco-free policies and walkable environments that make it easier—and safer—for everyone to be physically active.

These healthy steps can also lower the dose of medicines needed to keep hypertension under control. And speaking of hypertension, even small reductions in blood pressure translate into many fewer heart attacks, strokes, heart failure, kidney disease, and even dementia. These little things are indeed the big things that can help us all make great strides in health.

Million Hearts® is committed to helping people make small changes that can add up to long and healthy lives. Whether you're just looking to boost your physical activity or you're recovering from a cardiac event, start small and take the long view. Read on for tools, stories, and articles to help you and your community live your best lives—one step at a time.

—Janet Wright, MD, FACC
Executive Director, Million Hearts®

[Learn How to Reach Your Physical Activity Goals](#)

Tools You Can Use

Video highlights personal stories on the benefits of self-measured blood pressure monitoring.

This patient- and professional-friendly video from the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) highlights the profound impact of self-measured blood pressure monitoring programs on patients and clinical teams in three states.

The FH Foundation's toolkit breaks down the basics of familial hypercholesterolemia.

Start planning for National Cholesterol Awareness Month in September! See the FH Foundation's media toolkit for shareable resources to help educate people about familial hypercholesterolemia—an inherited, and often undiagnosed, cholesterol disorder that greatly increases the risk for heart disease.

This toolkit helps practitioners build connections between communities and clinics.

The Million Hearts® Collaboration developed the Community-Clinical Linkages Toolkit to complement the CDC Practitioner's Guide. Together, these resources help state and local public health professionals collaborate and connect with clinical partners to improve health across communities.

Encourage activity-friendly built environments (BE) in your community with this ready-made slide presentation.

The CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity released a package of BE Active resources to help community stakeholders foster activity-friendly built environments. Resources include real-world examples, implementation and visual guides, and a presentation with talking points to help local leaders educate others about the importance of designing activity-friendly communities.

Quick Fact

Regular physical activity can improve cholesterol levels, including increasing the "good" high-density lipoprotein cholesterol. However, between 2010 and 2015, **only 23% of U.S. adults** [PDF-844 KB] met federal guidelines for recreational aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.

Million Hearts® in the Community

Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) transform blood pressure control rates in underserved populations. [PDF - 271 KB]

FQHCs in Ohio and New Jersey became Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge Champions after achieving incredible results for traditionally underserved populations by adopting patient-centered medical home care models.

Allentown, Pennsylvania uses click-to-walk technology to inspire physical activity.

Allentown's two year-old program, Million Clicks for Million Hearts®, continues to grow and bring the community together. The program encourages residents to use local trails, "click" a box as they walk by, and enter for chances to win prizes.

Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) excels in improving cardiac rehabilitation (CR) participation rates.

CR can improve people's chances for a healthy recovery after a cardiac event, but many people do not get referred to or enrolled in a local program. This medical center combined technology and a human touch to increase its CR participation rates.

The Wisconsin Chronic Disease Prevention Program creates a framework to guide statewide heart health promotion efforts.

Based on the Million Hearts® 2022 framework and supported by a robust network of partners, the Million Hearts® Wisconsin Framework helps build community-clinical linkages to improve cardiovascular health. Its complementary campaign *Keeping It in the 80s* encourages health systems and clinicians to strive for a patient hypertension control rate of 80% or higher.

The Science of Million Hearts®

Evidence supports clinicians' routine assessment and promotion of physical activity. (*Circulation*)

Blacks have a much higher risk for hypertension than do whites of the same age. (*JAHA*)

Women with hypertensive disorders during pregnancy are at risk for cardiovascular conditions years later. (*Ann Intern Med*)

People with hypertension spend nearly \$2,000 more annually on health care than people without hypertension. (*JAHA*)

Study shows opportunities for tobacco cessation treatment for people with mental or substance use disorders. (*MMWR*)

Study finds that e-cigarette use is unlikely to be a sufficient solution to help smokers quit. (*PLOS ONE*)

Do This!

Visit the [CDC Vital Signs Website](#).

CDC's September *Vital Signs* will report alarming news about cardiovascular events in 35- to 64-year-olds. We have to act now. Get involved by telling your Million Hearts® story, listening to the *Vital Signs* Town Hall, and sharing the *Vital Signs* report.