Cholesterol can be one of the most confusing health topics.

It's really no wonder. A blood test profile yields a lot of daunting numbers tied to unwieldy technical terms like "low-density lipoprotein" and "high-density lipoprotein." It can be a challenge to understand how food, physical activity, and family history influence those numbers. This confusion—and lots of misinformation from the Internet and other sources—surely contributes to the fact that half of all adults who could benefit from cholesterol-lowering medicines (statins) don’t take them.

Since the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology—along with a host of partners—released an update to the 2013 cholesterol management guideline, the new recommendations provide greater specificity about medicines and high-risk populations and continue to emphasize the importance of a heart-healthy lifestyle, teach healthy behaviors, and share decision making. This collaborative approach can help each of us better understand our personal risk of a heart attack or stroke, the benefits and risks that we may expect from medication, and how to tackle obstacles to healthy habits.

And just in time to help you chart an active 2019 are the newly updated physical activity guidelines. The new guidelines detail strong evidence that people can lower cardiovascular disease risk with regular activity.

Quick Fact

About 1 in 10 American adults, or 71 million people, get less than 10 minutes of exercise a week, a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD). Learn more, including strategies to change while earning a continuing medical education credit from Medscape.

American Heart Association releases scientific statement on statin safety

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently announced recalls of angiotensin II receptor blockers, including valsartan, losartan, and irbesartan. FDA administered this recall after discovering trace amounts of potentially cancer-causing impurities in specific lots of these medications.

Million Hearts® in the Community

NACCHO announces funding opportunity for public health agencies.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is calling for funding applications from agencies that plan to implement Million Hearts® 2022 strategies in their communities. The application deadline was January 17, 2019.

Story details successes in implementing Million Hearts® strategies in communities.

Through the Million Hearts® in Municipalities project, public health professionals promoted strategies to reduce cardiovascular disease risk, such as a social media campaign to encourage tobacco cessation in Bell County, Texas, and an effort to create environments that encourage physical activity in Albany County, New York.

Science brief outlines evidence from hypertension control interventions.

This summary from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes how three health departments used evidence-based interventions to diagnose and manage hypertension, and explains what they found.

Million Hearts® in Municipalities

The Science of Million Hearts®

American Heart Association releases scientific statement on statin safety and efficacy.

(From Circulation) Smokers with mental health or substance use disorders have higher risk of death, not enough cessation counseling.

New Physical Activity Guidelines encourage people to “Move Your Way.”

The updated Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans detail the physical activity behaviors that can increase health benefits and reduce disease risk. The recommendations provide greater specificity about medicines and high-risk populations and continue to emphasize the importance of a heart-healthy lifestyle, teach healthy behaviors, and share decision making.

Quick Fact

About 1 in 10 American adults, or 71 million people, get less than 10 minutes of exercise a week, a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD). Learn more, including strategies to change while earning a continuing medical education credit from Medscape.

Do This!

View a Map of the Hypertension Control Champions.

Get a sense of the national scope of the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge.

New Physical Activity Guidelines detail strong evidence that people can lower CVD risk with regular activity.

Read the recommendations and see how to promote them in your community. The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines encourage people to “Move Your Way.”

Task force releases clinical consensus on strategies to help patients quit tobacco.

Go online to review the draft report and share comments.