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KAISER PERMANENTE® thrive



February 2025

The monthly health newsletter is designed to help keep your workforce healthy and motivated all year. We share healthy ideas and inspiration with the team. Along with our health topic of the month, we share other resources to help your employees stay informed. We would like to encourage you to share these resources with your employees.

Welcome to the February edition of the Kaiser Permanente Newsletter! We aim to help you explore new ways to be the best **YOU**. Join us in making healthy habits this month and keeping it going throughout the year! For **February** let's focus on **Heart Health**. At Kaiser Permanente, we know total health and wellness go beyond the doctor's office. That's why we're here to help you find the high-quality care and resources you need.



When it comes to keeping your heart healthy, we have you covered. Our collaborative, team-based approach to care helps members with heart disease live longer and a healthy lifestyle. Below is a look at our care model at Kaiser Permanente:

[Prevention Programs](#)

Prevention is at the heart of our approach to cardiac care. We check your heart health numbers at almost every appointment and track them over time. Plus, automatic reminders from your electronic health record make it easier to stay current with preventive screenings. This helps us spot problems earlier and start treatment sooner. You can even get help making heart-healthy lifestyle choices. Together, we can work to keep your heart healthier for many years to come.

Advanced Treatments

No two hearts are the same, but every heart deserves high-quality care. At Kaiser Permanente, our members are 33% less likely to experience premature death due to heart disease. From preventive therapy to major surgery, we're here to help you get the right care for your condition.

Recovery Support

Experiencing a heart problem can be an intense, life-changing event. And managing a chronic heart condition can feel overwhelming, especially at first. When you need to get your heart back to healthy, your Kaiser Permanente care team is here to help you heal.

6 simple habits for a heart-healthy lifestyle

Poor diet

- **Reality check:** Many processed foods like hot dogs, bacon, deli meats, and frozen dinners have high amounts of sodium. Eating too much sodium can cause high blood pressure and other health issues. One study found that eating both processed and unprocessed meats can increase the risk of developing heart disease.
- **Big picture solution:** Making [healthy eating choices](#) is key to preventing cardiovascular diseases. That's why plant-based and [Mediterranean diets](#) can be so effective. They limit sugars, salt, and sodium. Instead the focus is on eating fruits, veggies, legumes, beans, and whole grains. You can start by making small changes to your diet, for example, having a "Meatless Monday" meal.
- **Healthy habit:** Portion control is also important, especially for adults who are overweight or obese. If you find yourself snacking between meals, take out a small portion and stash the rest. You're less likely to overeat when food's out of reach.

Lack of exercise

- **Reality check:** Physical inactivity can set a heart disease domino effect in motion. If you're not staying active, it's harder to prevent conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. And not getting enough physical activity can lead to heart disease even if you don't have other risk factors.

- **Big picture solution:** There's overwhelming evidence that exercise is medicine. The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (like brisk walking) or 75 minutes of high-intensity aerobic activity (like jogging). Not into cardio? One study suggests that an hour of weekly resistance/weight-training exercises could lower your risk for a heart attack or stroke up to 70%.
- **Healthy habit:** If you're short on time, start working out in 1- to 5-minute bursts. Or try making small changes to your daily routine. It can be as simple as [walking](#) instead of driving to your local park or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. And remember to pace yourself and start slow if you're beginning a new exercise routine. It's important to listen to your body [stay hydrated](#), take breaks when you need them, and stop if you feel short of breath.

Smoking

- **Reality check:** It's the heart's job to pump oxygen rich blood throughout your body. But when you smoke, your blood gets contaminated with chemicals that can lead to weaker blood vessels and heart damage. Smoking is responsible for 1 out of 5 deaths from heart disease.
- **Big picture solution:** Your best bet is to stop smoking. People who quit smoking will see incredible benefits, incredibly quickly. Living one year puff-free can lower your chance of a heart attack dramatically. Going cold turkey for 5 or more years? That can put your risk of a stroke back down to that of a nonsmoker. You can go over your plan for quitting smoking with your doctor. They may also recommend medications to help you quit.
- **Healthy habit:** One important step in quitting smoking is to [identify your smoking triggers](#). Triggers can be emotional (like stress) or physical (like drinking a cup of coffee). Once you know what your triggers are, you can find an activity to do instead of smoking. After a stressful meeting, for example, take a 10-minute walk or listen to a [guided meditation](#).

Drinking too much alcohol

- **Reality check:** Drinking too much [alcohol](#) can raise your blood pressure, cause irregular heartbeats, and contribute to [cardiomyopathy](#) — a condition that makes it hard for the heart to deliver blood.

- **Big picture solution:** Light to moderate alcohol consumption (1 drink per day for women, 2 drinks for men) may increase levels of HDL, the good cholesterol that helps keep LDL (the bad cholesterol) at bay. But if you're looking for healthy ways to manage cholesterol, it's best to avoid drinking entirely. The heart health benefits of moderate drinking are counterbalanced by alcohol's effects on other disorders such as liver cirrhosis, breast cancer, and head and neck cancers.
- **Healthy habit:** Stay mindful of when, where, and why you're most likely to drink. By being aware of your temptations, you can better prepare yourself to say no. Substitute alcohol with healthier alternatives, such as drinking a seltzer water or taking a walk around the block. By responding the same way each time, you'll start [building new habits](#).

Lack of sleep

- **Reality check:** Without long periods of deep sleep, your body will release chemicals that make it difficult for your heart rate and blood pressure to stay low. That means higher blood pressure while you're awake, which can lead to heart disease in the long run.
- **Big picture solution:** Most adults need about 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. If you're able to hit your sleep sweet spot, you could lower your risk for heart disease by 20% compared with short sleepers.
- **Healthy habit:** [finding a routine](#) and sticking to it, start by going to bed and waking up at the same time every day. This will keep your "internal clock" in sync, which naturally leads to more refreshing and satisfying sleep.

High-stress levels

- **Reality check:** Stress spikes your blood pressure by making your heartbeat faster. It's a temporary reaction that'll return to normal over time. But even short bouts of **high blood pressure** can be enough to damage to your heart and blood vessels.
- **Big picture solution:** Spending time in nature can help relieve stress and anxiety and help you feel healthier and happier. You can also get more stress-fighting benefits by inviting friends or loved ones on your next nature walk. Connecting with others is a great way to boost your mood. They can also offer support and help you avoid behaviors that further increase risk of heart disease, like physical inactivity and smoking.

- **Healthy habit:** It can be tough to zap stress in one sitting. So, try practicing micro-mindfulness throughout the day. Here are [quick ways to destress](#) wherever you go.

"Understanding your risk factors and working to correct them early is a critical first step down the path of better cardiovascular health." We have many resources to support your total health. [Learn more about heart health and our cardiac care.](#)

For more information please visit our website below OR Scan the QR Code:

www.kp.org/heart



SCAN ME

COME AND GET YOUR CALM ON!



What is Calm? The number one app for sleep and meditation which is designed to help lower stress, anxiety, and more. Free to all Kaiser Permanente members.

Calm features more than 100 guided meditations and sleep stories for a more restful sleep. It also features exclusive music tracks for focus, relaxation, sleep, and much more! This app is free to all Kaiser Permanente members. Please visit www.kp.org/selfcareapps to learn more.

Join us for 15 minutes to de-stress, reset, and renew yourself.

(open to everyone regardless of your health plan)

Wednesday, February 12th, 10 am - 10:15 am - [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Wednesday, February 26th, 2 pm - 2:15 pm [Click here to join the meeting](#)



Monthly Challenge: Stair Master

This month we want to get that heart rate up and we are challenging you to be a “Stair Master”. We ask that you climb those stairs at least 3 times a week. The goal is to go up 200 flights in 20 days (that’s going up and down does not count 10 flights per session). This is a great way to get your blood pumping (cardio) and your muscles working (strength) at the same time. If you don't have access to stairs look for a garage, shopping mall, or get out in nature.

Visit [Kaiser Permanente](#) for more resources and information. Keep an eye out for the next installment, and we hope you and your workforce have a happy, healthy February!



Valentine’s Day is a day to show appreciation for your favorite people; and a time to celebrate friendships, loved ones, and yourself. Here are some recipes to make!

[Pomegranate Chocolate Delights](#)

[Eat your heart out! Healthier Comfort Foods](#)

"Listen to the rhythm of your heart, it's your body's compass guiding you towards wellness."

kp.org/calpers

FEBRUARY

Heart Health

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Heart Healthy Foods: Shopping List 2	"Love is snuggling with my mom" Joy, age 6 3	Happy Bday Facebook 4	"Love is like when you love your pet" Hannah Mx, age 7 5	6 Simple Habits for a heart-healthy lifestyle 6	"Love is when someone opens their mouth and eats a big candy in one bite" Ms. Payne's 3rd grade class 7	FEB Challenge 1
All About High Blood Pressure 9	"Love is trust & they make you feel special & you would do anything for them" Manda, age 9 10	No Valentine? No problem! 11	Medicare Workshop 4pm 12 WEBINAR	"Love is like when you really like something...I love my food" Ms. Payne's 3rd grade class 13	Valentine's Day 14	15
"Love is connection" Biana, age 64 16	Preventing Heart Disease 17	"Love is... San Francisco & drawing" Ms. Payne's 3rd grade class 18	19	Dietary Approaches To Stopping Hypertension 20 WEBINAR	"Love is when you can find someone that wants to be in your life" Ms. Payne's 3rd grade class 21	"Love is my mom" Go, age 11 22
Change in Heartbeat Check Your Symptoms 23	"I love my In-N-Out & KFC" Ms. Payne's 3rd grade class 24	25	15-min Live Calm Sessions 2PM 26	27	Show your some love! 28	2025