



Jackson County Health Department

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Creating Healthy Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 1, 2023

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February is Heart Health Month

JACKSON COUNTY, MI – Heart disease is a leading cause of hospitalizations and deaths in Jackson. Statistics from 2019-2021 show an average of 588 Jackson County residents pass away from heart disease each year. February is National Heart Health Month and is a great time to educate yourself on heart disease, its risk factors, impacts on health, and methods of prevention.

A nutritious diet, regular exercise, a healthy weight, adequate sleep, and limiting smoking and alcohol intake can help prevent heart disease. During National Heart Health month, Jackson County Health Department would like to highlight the importance of fiber intake in the diet. Fiber is the portion of plant-derived foods that cannot be completely broken down by the body. Fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds are high in fiber. Dietary fiber has several heart and digestive health benefits. There are two main functions of fiber. First, intake of fiber can help with weight control due to its ability to help one feel full for a longer period of time, which may reduce overall calorie intake. Second, fiber when ingested will bind to the LDL 'bad' cholesterol in the body so that it cannot be absorbed, which reduces cholesterol levels. Adults should eat between 25-30g of fiber daily; most people fall short of this. Some of the highest-fiber foods are pears with skin on, fresh berries, avocado, brussel sprouts, lentils, kidney beans, oatmeal, popcorn, almonds, ground flaxseed, or chia seed. If your diet tends to include these foods, you are probably doing a good job with fiber intake. If you think your digestion is struggling, you could benefit from increasing your intake of these foods to help keep your heart healthy. To learn more about dietary fiber or to look up how much fiber a certain food contains, visit [Fiber | Nutrition.gov](https://www.nutrition.gov).

A healthy diet starts with being able to access healthy food. Jackson families with children under the age of five, and individuals that are pregnant, are invited to reach out to the Jackson County Health Department Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) office. Over 60% of families in Jackson are eligible for WIC benefits. WIC benefits can be used to purchase fresh fruit, veggies, and formula. In addition, WIC provides access to a dietitian or knowledgeable staff member to help create nutritional plans for you and your children. Call 517-788-4484 to talk with a WIC staff member and see if you or your children are [WIC eligible](#).

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Working together to create and promote a healthy community through disease prevention and control, health education, environmental protection and emergency preparedness.