

Taking Care of Our Hearts Together

in Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Communities



Heart disease is largely preventable, yet many people will likely develop coronary heart disease, the most common form of it. The disease affects millions, but some groups are affected more than others. Together, we can change that. Make heart disease prevention a priority for yourself and those in your community!

Why are some Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander subpopulations at higher risk of heart disease?

Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have high rates of certain risk factors for heart disease, such as obesity and hypertension (high blood pressure). Levels of risk factors for heart disease vary substantially among Asian American subgroups, with some having much higher rates of hypertension and diabetes and some with higher rates of abdominal obesity. Knowing your risk factors is key to understanding how to prevent heart disease and build a strong and healthy heart.

What steps can you take to improve your heart health – individually and as a community?

Social support can help a lot. Studies have shown that having positive, close relationships and feeling connected to others has health benefits. Studies have also shown that social support has positive effects on hypertension and cardiovascular health among Asian Americans. For example, personal networks among Chinese and Korean American populations can improve heart health by optimizing how people deal with stress, which is a risk factor for heart disease. There are many things you can do in your daily life alone, and with others, that can improve heart health:

Stay Active

Aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity weekly. Break it up into manageable chunks, like 30 minutes 5 days a week, or 10 minutes three times a day, 5 days a week. Take a walk after a meal, play a sport, join a dance class, or do anything you enjoy that gets your heart pumping.

Eat a Heart-Healthy Diet

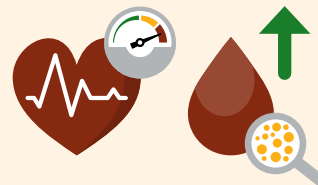
Whether it's a family gathering or your daily meals, fill your plate with vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean proteins, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products. Limit foods that are high in saturated fat, sugars, and salt and sodium, too.

Risk Factors

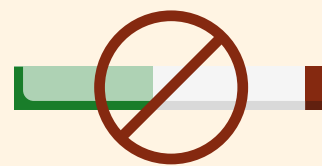
Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders as a group are **150% more likely to have obesity** than the overall U.S. population. They tend to have unique dietary patterns and are more likely to consume more calories each day, which may contribute to higher obesity rates compared to other ethnic groups.



Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are more likely to have higher rates of **hypertension** paired with **high cholesterol**.



Among Asian American subgroups, higher prevalence of **cigarette smoking** has been linked to cardiovascular disease.



Track Your Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease. Have your blood pressure checked at each healthcare provider visit and track your numbers using a [blood pressure log](#). Ask if you should self-measure your blood pressure at home.

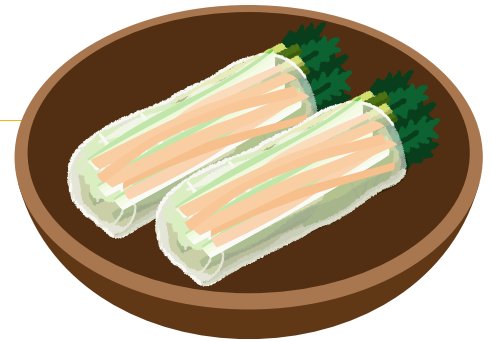
Manage Stress

Learning how to de-stress will make you happier and your heart healthier. Find ways to relax like watching a movie or practicing yoga to reduce your stress levels. Be sure to get enough good quality sleep.

Manage Your Diabetes

Having diabetes raises the risk of heart disease. Learn how to [control the ABCs of diabetes](#) and note your progress for each one.

Eating a healthy diet can be easy when you follow the [DASH eating plan](#), a flexible and balanced plan that helps you eat heart-healthy for life. You can still enjoy traditional foods by incorporating healthier alternatives into your favorite dishes. Try this DASH-friendly [Vietnamese Fresh Spring Rolls \(Gỏi Cuốn\) recipe](#). For more healthy recipes, visit [NHLBI's Heart-Healthy Eating](#) webpage.



Control Your Cholesterol

Have your cholesterol checked by a healthcare provider. Use the [My Heart Health Tracker](#) to keep track of your numbers. Talk to your provider about changes in your lifestyle that can help or medications you might need.

Stop Smoking

Take steps to [quit smoking](#). Make a list of reasons to quit, select a quit date, and write a contract that outlines your plan for quitting. Ask your healthcare provider for help.

Vietnamese Fresh Spring Rolls (Gỏi Cuốn)

- 1 cup** carrots, cut into long, thin strips
- 2 cups** bean sprouts
- 2 cups** cucumber, seeds removed and cut into long, thin strips
- 1 cup** minced scallions
- ½ cup** chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ cup** chopped fresh mint
- 8** rice paper wrappers

1. Toss first six ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Soak one rice paper wrapper in warm water until soft (1 to 2 minutes). Shake off excess water.
3. Place vegetable filling off-center on rice paper, and fold like an egg roll (tuck in the sides to keep the filling inside).
4. Repeat with remaining vegetable filling and rice paper wrappers.
5. Once you have assembled all of the spring rolls, serve immediately.

What are some ways to support each other as you take care of your hearts together?

Join forces with people at home, at work, in your neighborhood, or online to stay motivated and commit to being heart-healthy together. Have conversations about heart health, and encourage each other to know healthy ranges for blood pressure and cholesterol levels and what your numbers are. Set goals for maintaining a healthy weight and share tips and resources to incorporate heart-healthy behaviors into your daily routines. Help your community stay physically active by planning and participating in group activities that promote fitness at schools, churches, and parks. By focusing on heart health as a community, we can motivate and encourage one another to prevent heart disease.

For more information on heart disease prevention, visit www.hearttruth.gov.