



February 2021

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines



February 17 - EAP Webinar: "Managing Staff Through Stressful Situations" - [Register Here](#)

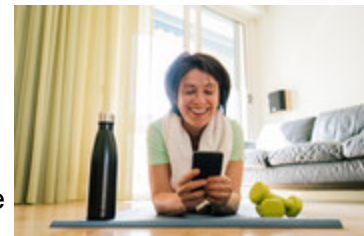
February 24 - Health Care Commission Meeting - [Click Here for more information](#)

February 24 - KDHE Webinar, "Candice McField: How to Maintain Motivation and Overcome Setbacks" (1 Credit) - [Register Here](#)

March 8-19 - Naturally Slim Registration Open for Session 2 (April 5)

HealthQuest on the Go!

Easily earn your HealthQuest Credits while on the go! From recording daily steps to completing training modules, it's all available through the Healthy Path mobile app.



The mobile application can be downloaded through both the iTunes and Google Play stores for free. Just search for "Healthy Path" by Cerner Corporation.

To make things even easier, you can connect your wearable device to the app, automatically uploading your steps for the day.

[Click Here for more information.](#)



WeKan
Wellness for Employees of Kansas

STAY THE COURSE
How to Maintain Motivation and Overcome Setbacks

PRESENTED BY :  Candice McField
FITNESS  Arise!

Brought to you by: The Kansas Department of Health and Environment

The Kansas Department of Health & Environment is hosting a webinar by local fitness expert and author Candice McField titled, "Stay the Course: How to Maintain Motivation and Overcome Setbacks." Attendance earns 1 HealthQuest Credit.

The webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24 from 11-11:45 am .

[Click here to register.](#)

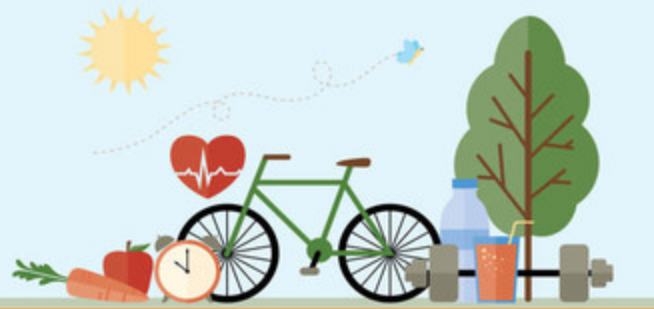


It's February – American Heart Month – a time when the nation spotlights heart disease, the No. 1 cause of death of Americans.

In most cases, heart disease is preventable when people adopt a healthy lifestyle, which includes not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar and cholesterol, treating high blood pressure, getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week and getting regular checkups.

There are a number of things that we can all do every day to improve our heart health and HealthQuest is here to help.

Healthy Heart



Check out our new [Heart Healthy Toolkit](#), designed to bring awareness to heart health and provide State of Kansas employees and their families with tools to live a healthier life. This toolkit includes;

- **Exercises You Can Do at your Desk:** Interactive slideshow to learn how to do exercises at your desk to promote health.
- **Marking Heart Month Flyer:** Information on risk factors and treatment and prevention.
- **Motivation Guide:** Explains how to achieve motivation and how to stay motivated for the long run by setting SMART goals.
- **Heart Smart:** HelpSheet for identifying how to lower and monitor your risk.
- **Are You at Risk?** Assessment to identify your level of risk for Heart Disease.

February Health Blog



Relaxation and the Heart

We know that exercise and eating right leads to a healthier heart, but studies reveal that relaxation techniques also have a positive impact on heart health. You can try a few small changes throughout your day to promote relaxation.

- **Laugh more often.** Laughter can relieve your stress response and leave you with a good, relaxed feeling. Make it a habit to share funny jokes or stories with those around you. Hang up silly photos in your home or office for an added

humor boost.

- **Breathe deeply.** Deep breathing triggers your body's relaxation response. Close your eyes and try to focus on filling your belly with air. Slowly release your air until your heart rate and mind are at ease.
- **Meditate.** Meditation can wipe away the day's stress and bring inner peace. Focusing your attention takes practice, especially in a world that's filled with text messages, social media, and other distractions. Start by taking a few minutes each day to unplug and eliminate the stream of jumbled thoughts that may be crowding your mind.
- **Get enough sleep.** Getting enough sleep at night allows your mind and body to rest so you are more equipped to handle stress, leaving you more at ease during the day. Sleep experts suggest aiming for about 7 to 9 hours of sleep.

Relaxation techniques are good for your heart, but don't forget that these practices are not replacements for preventive exams or medication. Before beginning a new activity program, talk with your primary care provider for guidance on keeping your heart healthy.

A Note from your Health Coach

Heart disease is the leading killer of Americans, and stress can play a significant role in increasing heart disease risk. Stress can lead to elevated blood pressure, cholesterol levels, physical inactivity and depression, all which may contribute to increased risk for heart disease.

Stress can play a role in how we perform our daily activities. It can affect our mood, heart rate, diet, and weight. It can also contribute to headaches, forgetfulness, back pain, and stomach issues. And it can lead to increases in smoking and alcohol consumption. Managing stress is good not only for your heart health, but for your overall health as well.

Perform a self-check, how do you handle stress?

- Do you overeat?
- Do you smoke or drink alcohol?

- Do you sleep more or too little?
- Do you procrastinate? Become forgetful? Lack concentration?
- Are you moody? Argumentative? Hard to get along with?
- Do you shut down mentally, physically, and/or emotionally?

Tips to managing stress:

- Exercise, enjoy nature, fresh air, a change of environment.
- Slow down, meditate, pray, practice deep breathing techniques. Put on relaxing music.
- Practice positive self-talk (negative talk increases stress).
- Act before you react.
- Break down issues into smaller parts and tackle them one by one.
- Visit with a friend
- Read a book or work on a hobby you enjoy.
- Eat healthy, limit caffeine and alcohol.

Having a healthy lifestyle and diet are important steps toward preventing heart disease. Consider [scheduling a Health Coaching session](#) on your HealthQuest portal for more tips about developing healthy habits.



Build Resiliency through Healthy Relationships

We have all felt stress. It can be a positive force, motivating you to perform well or giving you a sudden burst of strength. Often, though, stress is a negative force

giving you a sudden burst of strength. Often, though, stress is a negative force. When your body's natural alarm system responds to everyday stressors, it can have negative consequences for your health. Sudden emotional stresses – especially anger – can trigger heart attacks, arrhythmias, and even sudden death. Other forms of chronic stress, such as depression and low levels of social support, have also been implicated in increased cardiovascular risk.

Stress is an inevitable part of our lives. We have all experienced it to some degree: during a disagreement with a family member; while speaking to a large group; while meeting a deadline at work. Our various experiences are constantly requiring for us to adapt to changes and cope with stressors. Staying connected with friends and family and reaching out to others is one of the most effective ways to manage your stressors and promote a longer, healthier life. Here are some tips to build healthy relationships with family, friends and co-workers.

- **Seek Support** - Do not wait until you reach your breaking point. Recognize and admit that you are feeling anxious and stressed. Pay attention to your body's physical signs of stress (e.g., headaches, stomach discomfort).
- **Nurture Relationships that Matter**- More interpersonal contact with the right people can help relieve stress. Research has found that the greatest happiness levels are associated with spending time with people we like.
- **Find a Work Friend**- Build relationships at work by connecting with those that have similar workplace goals. Friendships with your colleagues can make your time spent at work, much happier.
- **Connect with Your Partner/Family** - Try to strengthen your relationship by turning to each other often. You can do this by simply talking about the everyday events, like the news, a movie you want to see, a good book that you have read or the accomplishments of your children. This builds the confidence and trust in your relationship so you can discuss heavier and potentially stressful topics when they arise.

Call Your EAP for Assistance

Guidance Resources Specialists are available 24/7, 7 days a week to provide you with confidential and free assistance. **Contact us at 1-888-275-1205, Option 1.**

We are here to help with everyday stressors; pet care, homework and study habits, child care needs, wills and estate planning, moving arrangements, divorce and child custody, locating a support group, older adult resources, construction and remodeling

custody, locating a support group, older adult resources, construction and remodeling, and more.

[Click Here for more information about your Employee Assistance Program.](#)



Each person's path to well-being is unique and personal.

Need an accessible alternative for an activity?
[Click here to learn more.](#)

The image shows a person in a wheelchair and a cyclist riding a bridge over a wooded area. The person in the wheelchair is on the left, and the cyclist is on the right. The bridge has metal railings. The background is a lush green forest. The text is overlaid on a dark blue background.

