



TPA HEALTH NEWSLETTER

Health Awareness & Action

MESSAGE FROM THE CMO

A MESSAGE TO OUR COMMUNITY

February is a powerful intersection of reflection and action. As we observe **Black History Month and American Heart Month**, we are reminded that health equity is not just a goal — it is a responsibility.

Black and Caribbean populations in New York City and the Caribbean experience higher rates of:

- Hypertension
- Diabetes and prediabetes
- High cholesterol
- Coronary artery disease

The good news:

Heart disease is largely preventable when we act early.

These conditions do not appear overnight. They develop over years — often starting before symptoms ever appear. The good news is that early screening, education, and lifestyle changes can dramatically reduce risk.

This month, we urge you to:

- Know your ABCS
- Get screened early
- Move your body
- Take action for your heart — and your family's future

With commitment to your wellness,

— *Chief Medical Officer*

WEBINAR

HEART OF THE MATTER

AMERICAN HEART HEALTH-HYPERTENSION

HEALTHFORUM.CASONY.ORG/

[CLICK HERE](#)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

"Small changes create big victories. Your strongest year starts now."

Inside This Issue:

- **Know your numbers**
- MythBusters for February
- Building a Heart Healthy Routine
- **Take MASSIVE Action & Community Call**

Screening saves lives. Early action prevents disease.



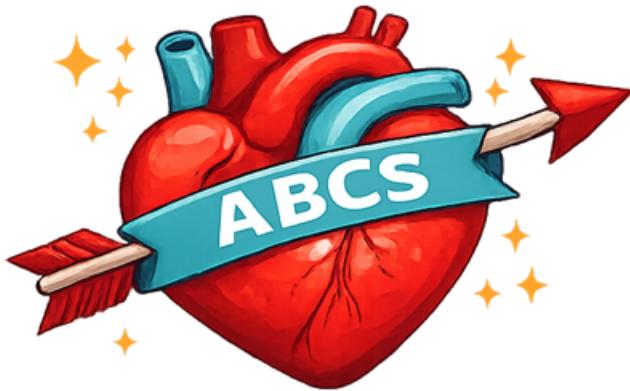
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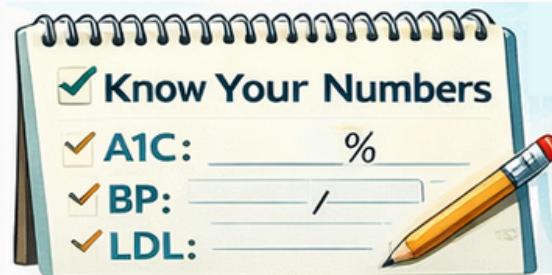


KNOW YOUR NUMBERS-ABCS



RISK FACTORS AFFECTING THE HEART

A A1C | **B** Blood Pressure | **C** Cholesterol



How the ABCS Affect the Heart

- Over the past few months, we've walked through the ABCS of health:
- November — A1C & Diabetes
- December — Blood Pressure & Hypertension
- January — Cholesterol
- February — Screenings & Heart Disease
- Why This Matters
- These three risk factors often begin early and silently:

A — A1C (Diabetes & Prediabetes)

- Millions of adults have prediabetes and don't know it
- Elevated blood sugar damages blood vessels over time

B — Blood Pressure

- Nearly 25% of males develop hypertension by their 20s-30s
- High blood pressure strains the heart and arteries

C — Cholesterol

- 1 in 2-3 adults has elevated cholesterol
- Cholesterol screening should begin in early adulthood
- Plaque buildup leads to narrowed coronary arteries

S — Screenings

The downstream effect of uncontrolled A, B, and C is often: **Coronary Artery Disease, heart attacks, strokes & dialysis**

► The leading cause of cardiovascular death

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS-ABCS

Black History Month | February 2026

Know Your ABCs for Black Heart Health

A A1C / DIABETES

High blood sugar damages arteries

Over 100 million adults have diabetes or prediabetes

Protect Your Heart. Honor Your Heritage

Caribbean Heart Health: Know Your ABCs

B BLOOD PRESSURE

- Nearly 1 in 2 adults have high blood pressure**
- Silent risk that strains the heart**

Take action for your heart, for your family, and for your legacy

Ask Your Doctor About A-B-C Screenings

Know Your ABCs for Heart Health

C CHOLESTEROL

High LDL cholesterol leads to clogged arteries

Ask Your Doctor About A-B-C Screenings

Early detection protects hearts and saves lives

5 servings fruits/veggies daily	30 mins/day	10 mins mindfulness	8 glasses/day	7 hrs/night
Nutrition	Fitness		Hydration	Sleep

BUILDING A HEART-HEALTHY ROUTINE



YOUR HEART IS A MUSCLE

EXERCISE FOR A HEALTHY HEART

Exercise Is Medicine

- Improves blood pressure
- Raises “good” HDL cholesterol
- Improves insulin sensitivity
- Strengthens the heart muscle
- Reduces stress and inflammation

Heart-Healthy Habits

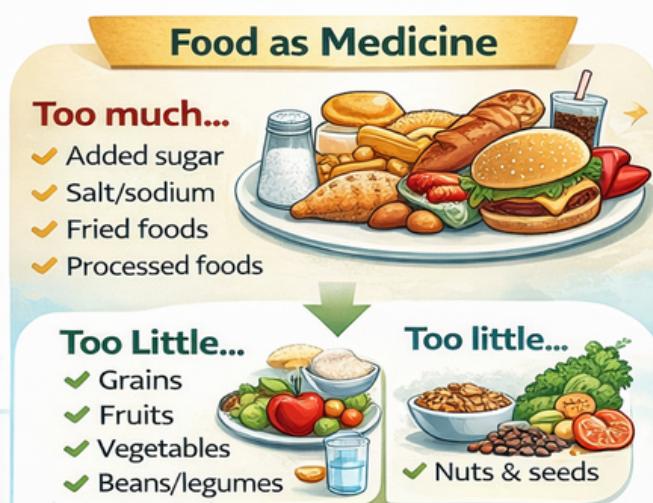
- Eat whole, minimally processed foods
- Limit salt, sugar, and saturated fats
- Prioritize sleep and stress management
- Stay connected to community and culture
- Schedule preventive care — not just sick visits



Goal:

- ➡ At least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week

HOW DO YOU REWARD/FEED YOUR HEART MUSCLE?



CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Nearly every professional society in the world endorses a diet based on plant food and lower in processed food and fats for optimum health maintenance.
- Food Is Medicine is a treatment plan that has far greater health improvements than any known medication.
- Food Is Medicine has the power to improve human and planetary health, and is extremely cost-effective.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE (2024) 137:1180–1183

DASH Eating Plan	
The Benefits: Lowers blood pressure & LDL "bad" cholesterol.	
✓ Eat This	⚠ Limit This
Vegetables	Fatty meats
Fruits	
Whole grains	
Fat-free or low-fat dairy	Full-fat dairy
Fish	
Poultry	Sugar sweetened beverages
Beans	
Nuts & seeds	Sweets
Vegetable oils	Sodium intake

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH

MyPlate.gov

Click on a food group to explore!

QR code

5 servings fruits/veggies daily 30 mins/day 10 mins mindfulness 8 glasses/day 7 hrs/night
 Nutrition Fitness Hydration Sleep

EAT A HEALTHY MEAL EARLY**Why Late-Night Eating Causes Weight Gain****Slower Metabolism**

Eating late can reduce overnight calorie burning.

**Disrupted Hormones**

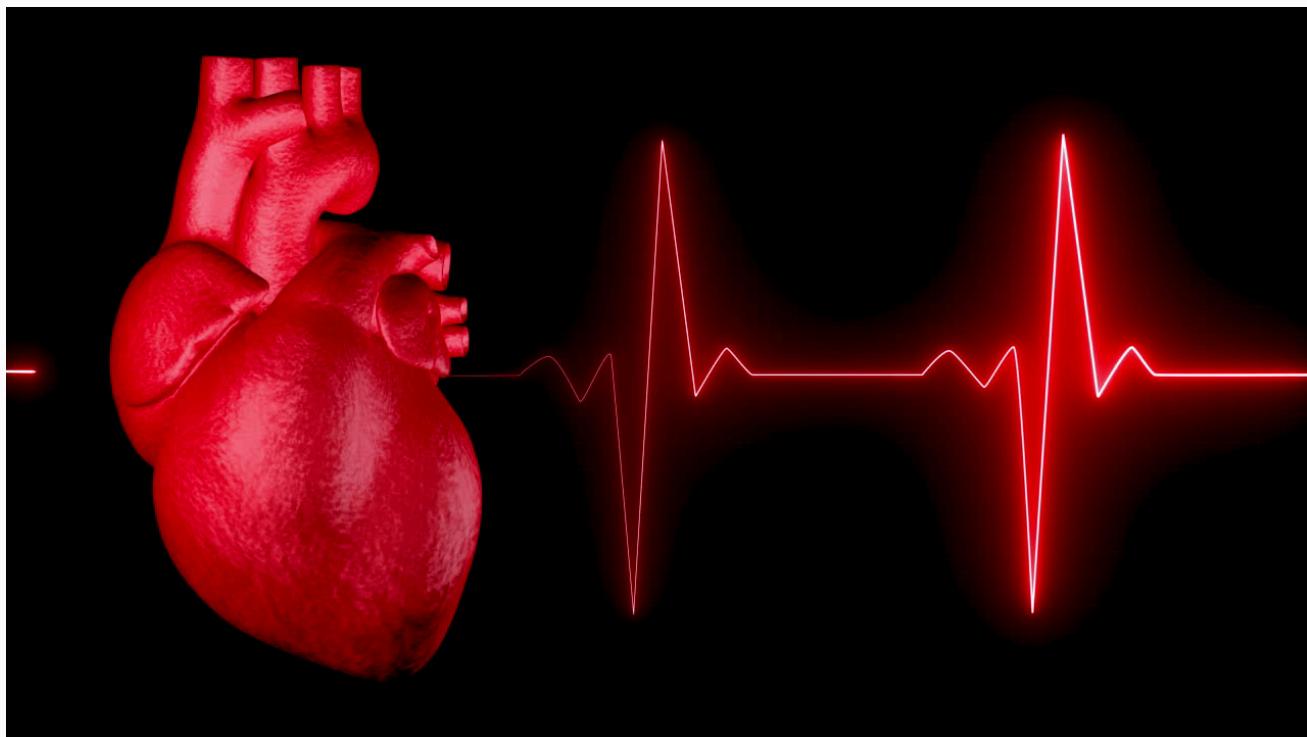
Late eating can affect hormones that regulate hunger.

**Increased Appetite**

Late eaters may feel hungrier the next day.

**Poor Food Choices**

People tend to crave high-calorie foods at night.



THE CARIBBEAN FOOD SWAP

"HEALTHY DOESN'T MEAN GIVING UP CULTURE"

Caribbean Food Swaps

(January Edition)

INSTEAD OF



Fried chicken



Macaroni and cheese



White rice



Soda

CHOOSE



Grilled chicken



Roasted vegetables



Brown rice



Water

FOOD SWAP

Swap these:

- Fried → baked or air-fried
- White rice → brown rice / quinoa
- Sweet drinks → water + lime
- Heavy salted meats → fresh fish
- Late dinner → earlier healthy balanced plate
- Macaroni & cheese >> Roasted vegetables & provisions

Snack with vegetables, nuts and seeds

Culture stays. Habits change. Health transforms.

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 Nutrition Fitness Hydration Sleep

The Caribbean Healthy Plate

A Guide to a Balanced Caribbean Meal

What a Healthy Meal Looks Like

Fill Half Your Plate

Fruits & Vegetables

More colors = more protection

Choose Natural Starches

Grains

Protein

Drink Water Most often

Drink water daily for hydration—especially in warm climates.

Fruits

- Mango, Papaya
- Guava • Citrus

Choose Natural Starches

- Yam • Cassava • Dasheen
- Sweet Potato • Brown Rice

Healthy Protein

- Fresh Fish • Beans
- Lentils • Eggs

★ Peanuts • Pumpkin seeds • Sesame • Chicken Healthy proteins keep you full and satisfied.

Nuts & Seeds

- Peanuts
- Pumpkin seeds
- Sesame

Healthy Oils:

- Coconut oil (small amounts)
- Avocado

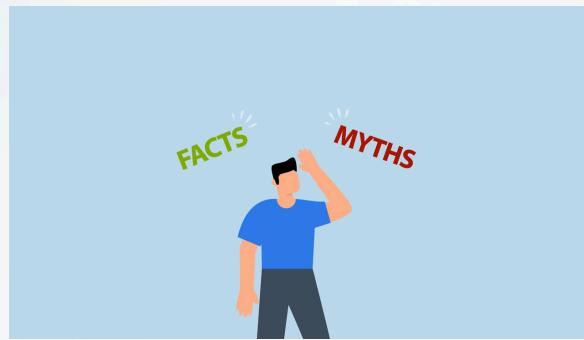
World Health Organization

Pan American Organization

CARIBBEAN PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY

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 Nutrition Fitness Hydration Sleep

MythBusters



MYTH 1: Heart disease only affects older adults

FACT: Risk factors begin as early as age 20

MYTH 2: High blood pressure always has symptoms

FACT: Hypertension is often called the silent killer

MYTH 3: If I'm active, I don't need screenings

FACT: Even active people need to know their numbers

MYTH 4: Cholesterol problems start later in life

FACT: Plaque buildup begins decades before symptoms

MYTH 5: Diabetes only affects sugar levels

FACT: Diabetes directly damages the heart and arteries and is the leading cause of kidney disease

MYTH 6: Family history means nothing can be done

FACT: Lifestyle changes significantly reduce risk

MYTH 7: Heart scans are only for people with symptoms

FACT: Early scans can identify silent disease

MYTH 8: Exercise only helps with weight

FACT: Exercise strengthens the heart muscle itself

MYTH 9: Normal weight means low risk

FACT: Metabolic risk exists at any weight

MYTH 10: It's too late to change

FACT: It's never too late to protect your heart

MYTH 11: "Healthy food is too expensive."

→ **FACT:** Processed food costs more over time. Greens, peas, lentils, callaloo = cheap staples.

MYTH 12: "I'll start after Valentine's / Easter / Summer."

→ **FACT:** Delays worsen BP, cholesterol & glucose. Start small now.

MYTH 13: "My heart is fine — I'm just overweight."

→ **FACT:** Extra weight raises stroke, BP & heart failure risk.

MYTH 14: "I feel fine — I don't need screenings."

→ **FACT:** Heart disease, diabetes & high BP are SILENT for years.

MYTH 15: Cholesterol medication replaces healthy habits

→ **FACT:** Medication works best with nutrition, movement, and weight management

"IF YOU WANT A HEALTHY HEART FOLLOW THE **LIFE ESSENTIALS 8** BY THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION."

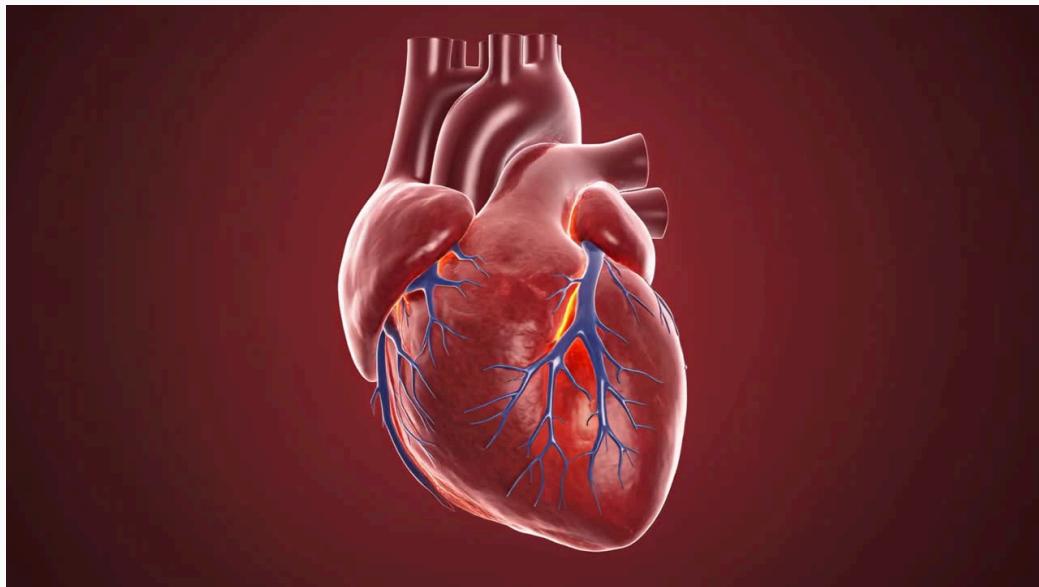


American Heart Association | To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives

Learn more about the American Heart Association's efforts to reduce death caused by heart disease and stroke. Also learn about cardiovascular conditions, ECC and CPR, donating, heart disease information for healthcare professionals, caregivers,...

 heart.org





What Is Metabolic Syndrome?

A cluster of conditions that raise heart disease and diabetes risk:

- **Increased waist circumference**
- **Elevated blood pressure**
- **High blood sugar**
- **High triglycerides**
- **Low "good" HDL cholesterol**

The more factors present, the higher the risk.

3 out of 5 risk factors defines metabolic syndrome-its preventable

METABOLIC SYNDROME

"Why Losing 10-15 lbs Can Change Everything"

What Happens When You Lose Early Weight:

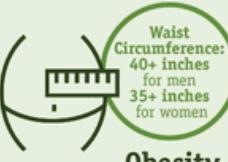
- Blood pressure drops
- A1C improves
- Sleep improves
- Joints hurt less
- Energy increases
- Mood lifts
- Heart strain decreases

Even modest weight loss changes your future risk dramatically.



KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

People with metabolic syndrome have **AT LEAST 3 OF THE FOLLOWING:**



Obesity

Waist Circumference:
40+ inches for men
35+ inches for women



HIGH Fasting Blood Glucose

Greater than or equal to 100 mg/dL



HIGH Triglycerides

Greater than or equal to 150 mg/dL



LOW HDL or "Good" Cholesterol

Less than 40 mg/dL for men
50 mg/dL for women



HIGH Blood Pressure

Greater than or equal to 130 mmHg/85 mmHg

WELLNESS CHECKLIST



Name: _____ Week of: _____

✓ Track your daily habits for optimal health!

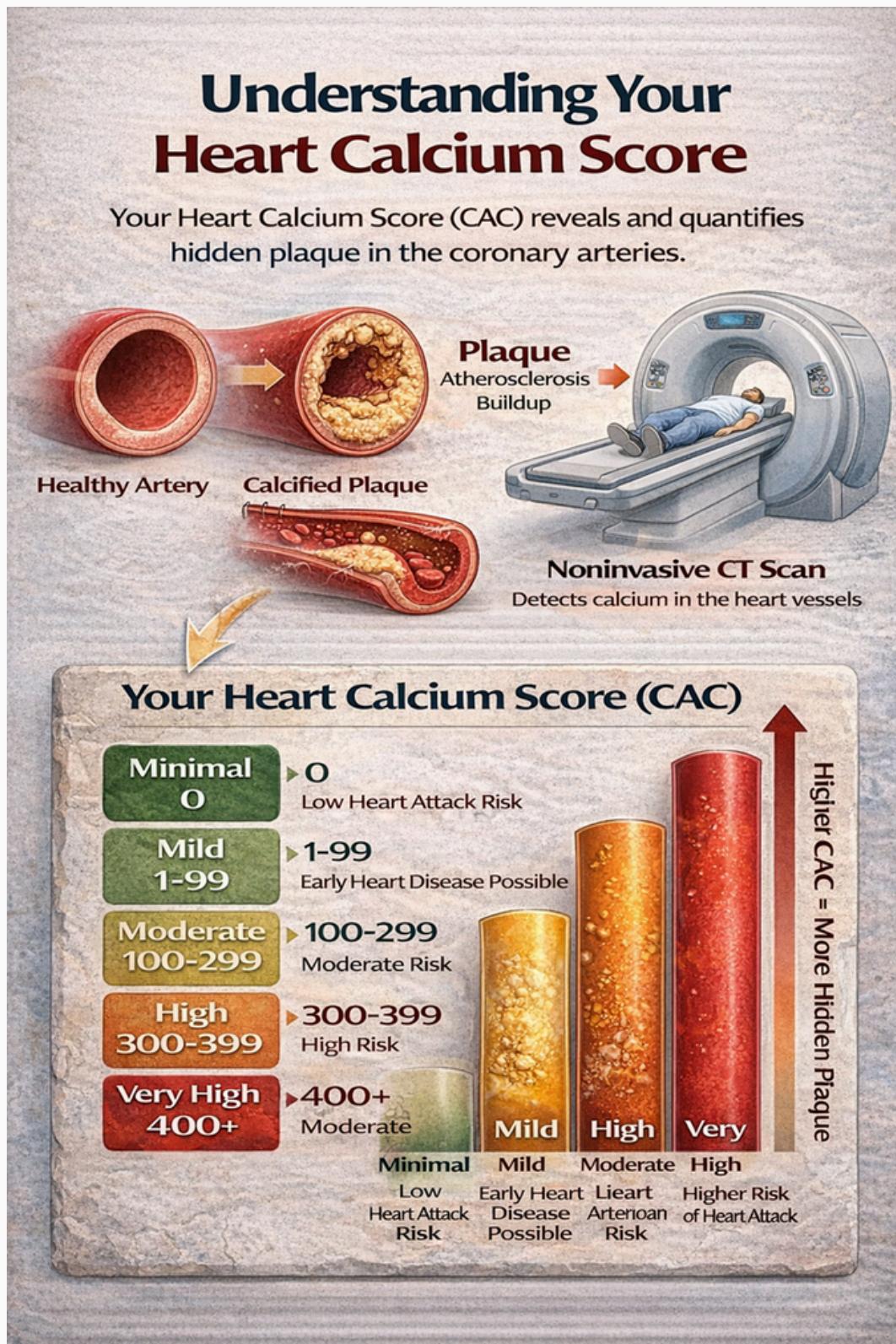
Habit	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sleep 7-8 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walk 30 min/day	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 Fruits + 3 Vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whole Grains	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nuts & Seeds	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Omega-3s	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6-8 Glasses Water	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stress Care	<input type="checkbox"/>						



5 servings fruits/veggies daily 30 mins/day 10 mins mindfulness 8 glasses/day 7 hrs/night
 Nutrition Fitness Hydration Sleep



ADVANCED SCREENING FOR HEART DISEASE (UNDER \$100)



5 servings fruits/veggies daily | 30 mins/day | 10 mins mindfulness | 8 glasses/day | 7 hrs/night
 Nutrition Fitness Hydration Sleep

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS TODAY

CALL YOUR DOCTORS OFFICE AND SCHEDULE A VISIT

Screening Action Checklist

Screening Action Checklist

- Talk with your provider
- Schedule screenings
- Get lab work

- Talk with your provider 
- Schedule screenings 
- Get lab work 
- Review results 
- Discuss family history 
- Address stress intentionally

🌐 Sleep 7-8 hours 🌟 Walk 30 min/day 🥗 2 fruits + 3 vegetables 🥔 Whole grains 🐟 Omega-3s 🌊 Water

YOUR FEBRUARY HEART HEALTH CHECKLIST

- ✓ KNOW YOUR A1C
- ✓ CHECK YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE
- ✓ REVIEW YOUR CHOLESTEROL LEVELS
- ✓ ASK ABOUT HEART SCREENINGS
- ✓ CONSIDER A HEART CALCIUM SCAN IF APPROPRIATE
- ✓ MOVE YOUR BODY EVERY DAY
- ✓ ENCOURAGE FAMILY MEMBERS TO GET SCREENED

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

PROTECTING OUR HEARTS HONORS OUR PAST, STRENGTHENS OUR PRESENT, AND SECURES OUR FUTURE.

THIS FEBRUARY, LET'S TURN AWARENESS INTO ACTION — FOR OURSELVES, OUR FAMILIES, AND OUR COMMUNITIES ACROSS NEW YORK CITY AND THE CARIBBEAN.

UPCOMING EVENTS

COLON, CULTURE & CHECKUPS
 THEME: COLON CANCER
 PREVENTION IN CARIBBEAN
 FAMILIES
 OBSERVANCES: COLORECTAL
 CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

🥗 5 servings fruits/veggies daily 🌟 30 mins/day 🌋 10 mins mindfulness 🌊 8 glasses/day 🌙 7 hrs/night
 Nutrition Fitness Hydration Sleep