

HEALTH UPDATES

STATISTICS &amp; RESOURCES

ACTION STEPS



# 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.

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.

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

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

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

The good news:

Heart disease is largely **preventable when we act early.**

**With commitment to your wellness,**

— *Chief Medical Officer*

## WEBINAR

### HEART OF THE MATTER

**AMERICAN HEART HEALTH-  
HYPERTENSION**

[HEALTHFORUM.CASONY.ORG/](https://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.**



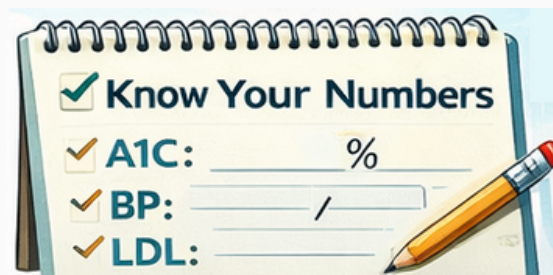
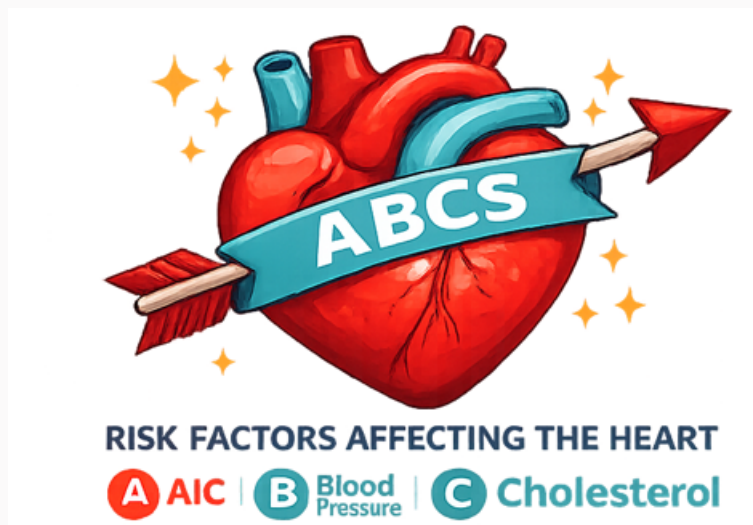
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[HEALTHFORUM.CASONY.ORG](https://HEALTHFORUM.CASONY.ORG)



# KNOW YOUR NUMBERS-ABCS



## 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

**Adults need a mix of physical activity to stay healthy.**

**Moderate-intensity aerobic activity\***  
Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.

at least **150 minutes a week**

**Muscle-strengthening activity**  
Do activities that make your muscles work harder than usual.

at least **2 days a week**

**AND**

\* If you prefer vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (like running), aim for at least 75 minutes a week.

If that's more than you can do right now, **do what you can.** Even 5 minutes of physical activity has real health benefits.

**Walk. Run. Dance. Play. What's your move?**

## Exercise Is Medicine

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

### Goal:

➡ At least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week

## Heart-Healthy Habits

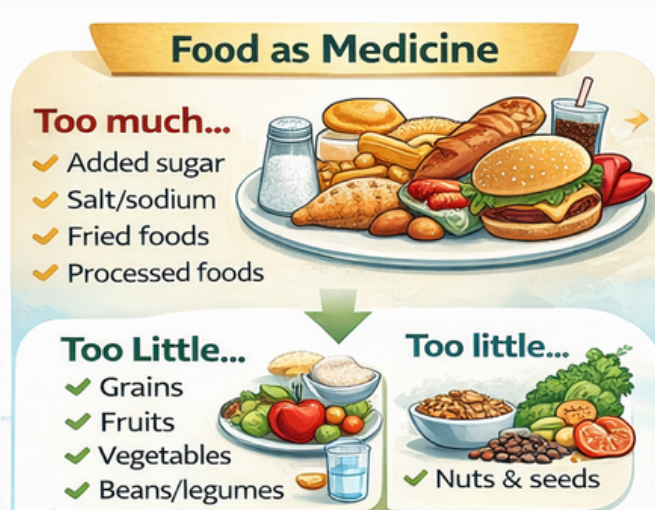
- **Eat** whole, minimally processed foods
- **Limit** salt, sugar, and saturated fats
- Prioritize sleep and **stress** management
- Stay connected to community and culture
- **Schedule** preventive care — not just sick visits



HOW DO YOU REWARD/**FEED** YOUR HEART MUSCLE?

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





### 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

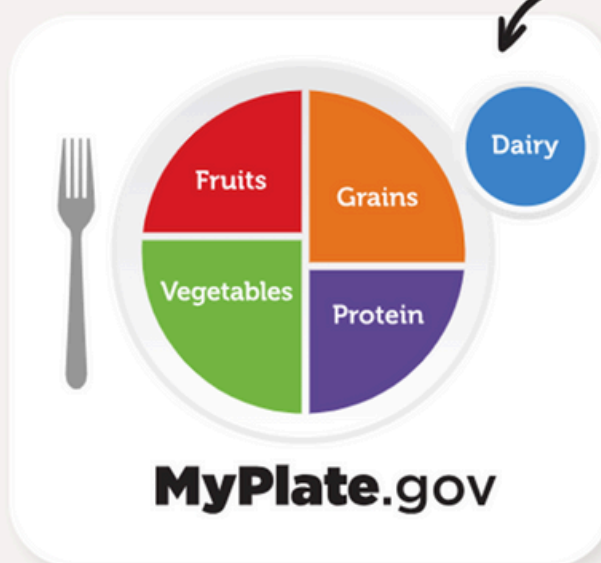
### DASH Eating Plan

**The Benefits:** Lowers blood pressure & LDL "bad" cholesterol.

✓ Eat This	⚠ Limit This
Vegetables	Fatty meats
Fruits	
Whole grains	Full-fat dairy
Fat-free or low-fat dairy	
Fish	Sugar sweetened beverages
Poultry	
Beans	Sweets
Nuts & seeds	
Vegetable oils	Sodium intake

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH)

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
 First heart



Click on a  
food group  
to explore!



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 Nutrition Fitness Hydration Sleep



## 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.



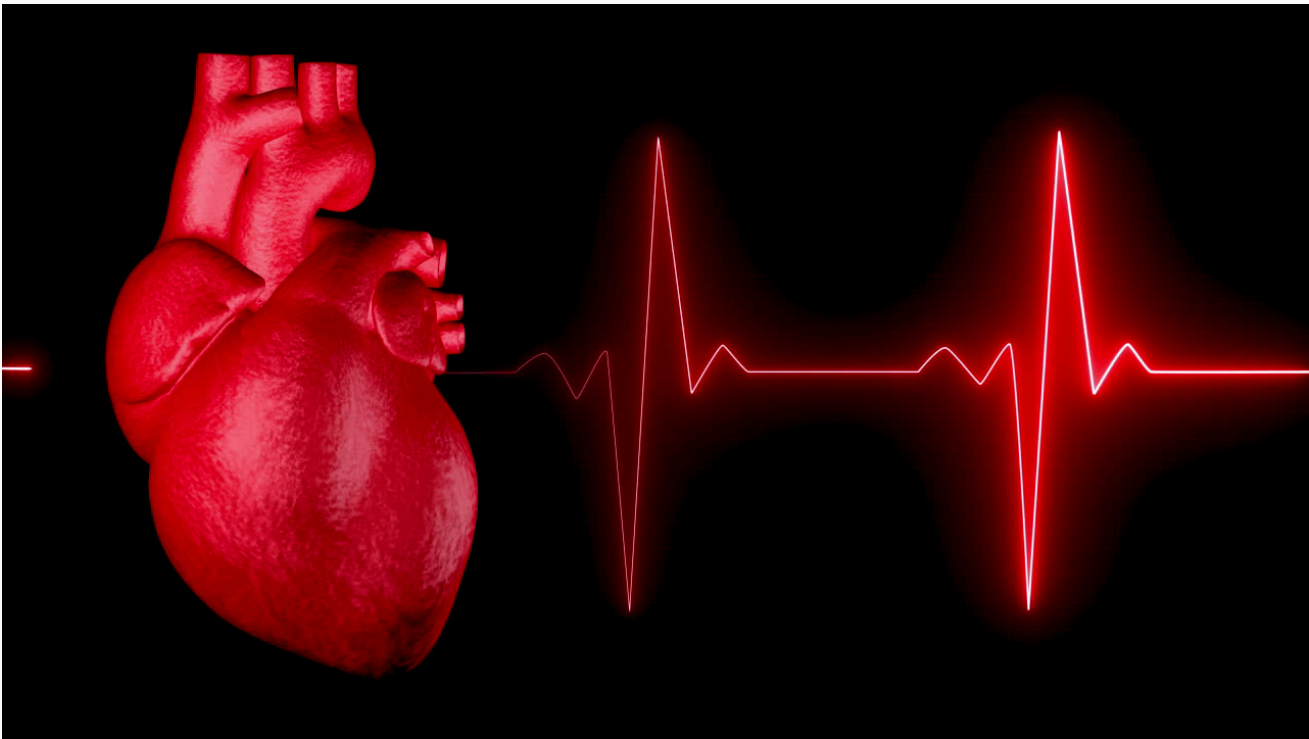
### Increased Appetite

Late eaters may feel hungrier the next day.



### Poor Food Choices

People tend to crave high-calorie foods at night.



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



# THE CARIBBEAN FOOD SWAP

"HEALTHY DOESN'T MEAN GIVING UP CULTURE"

## Caribbean Food Swaps

(January Edition)

INSTEAD OF



Fried chicken



CHOOSE



Grilled chicken



Macaroni and cheese



Roasted vegetables



White rice



Brown rice



Soda



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

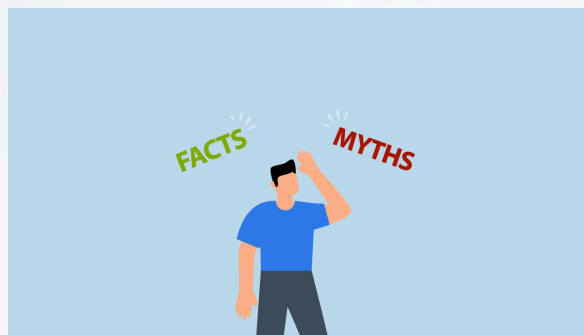
**Culture stays. Habits change. Health transforms.**

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Nutrition Fitness Hydration Sleep





# 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**

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



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



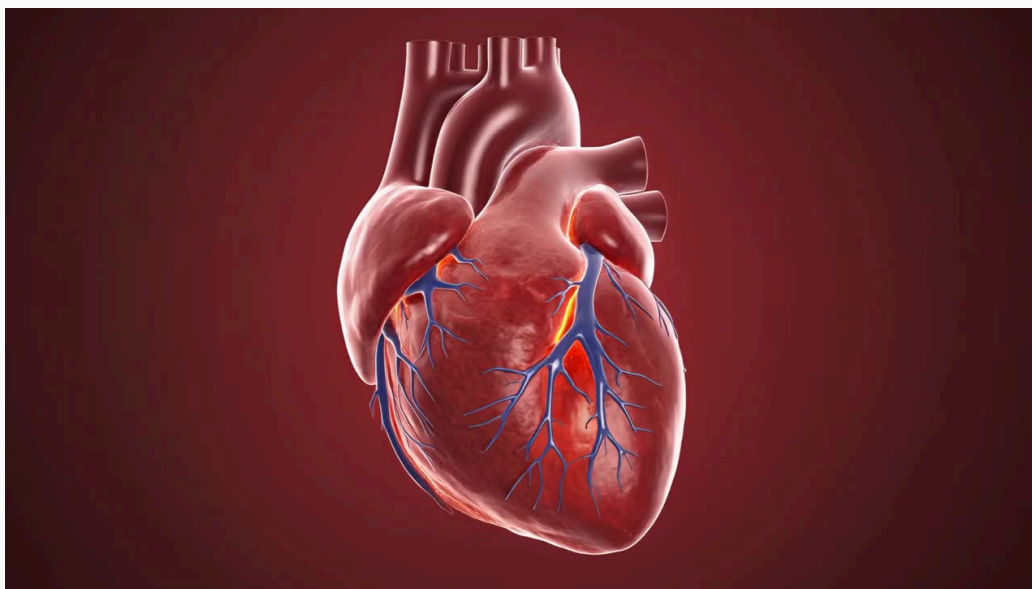
**American Heart Association | To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives**

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](https://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.



# WELLNESS CHECKLIST



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Track your daily habits for optimal health!

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



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 Nutrition   Fitness   Hydration   Sleep





# Heart Health Tracker Log

Record & track your key cardiometabolic markers over time and every doctor visit.

## ABCs Section for Heart Health

Date	A1C (%)	Blood Pressure		LDL Cholesterol	HDL Cholesterol	Triglyceride (mg/dL)	Vitamin D (ng/mL)
		Systolic	Diastolic				
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							

### ☐ Additional Health Tests

- ☐ Thyroid Function
- ☐ Kidney Function
- ☐ Liver Function

### ☐ Screening Tests

- ☐ Colon Screening
- ☐ Mammogram
- ☐ Cervical/Ovary
- ☐ Prostate
- ☐ Calcium Scoring



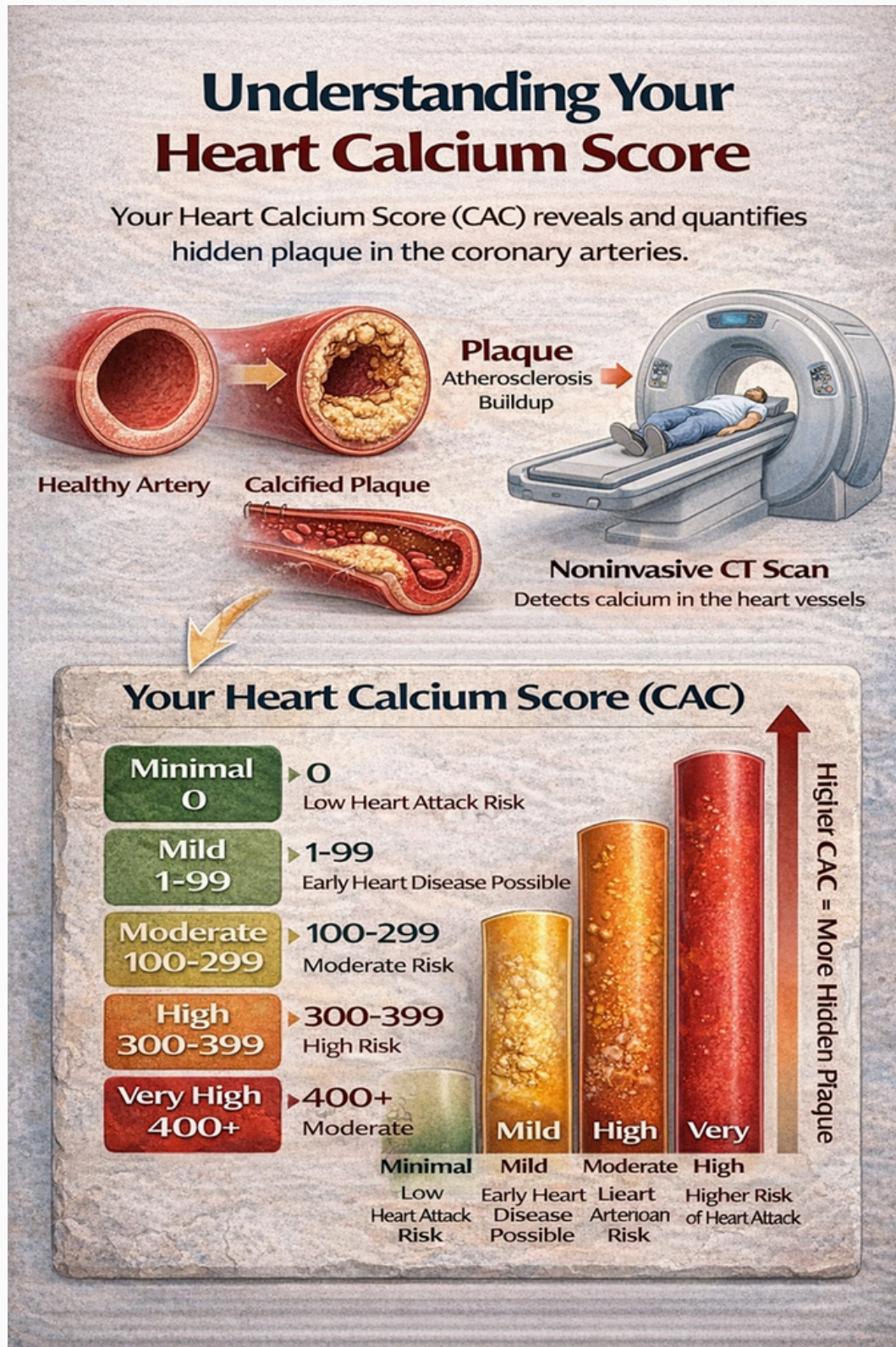
## ABCs Section for Heart Health

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A1C < 5.7% | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blood Pressure < 120/80 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LDL        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HDL Cholesterol < 100   |

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



## ADVANCED SCREENING FOR HEART DISEASE (UNDER \$100)



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



# KNOW YOUR NUMBERS TODAY

CALL YOUR DOCTORS OFFICE AND SCHEDULE A VISIT

## Screening Action Checklist



## 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

