

FEBRUARY 2023

CHRONIC DISEASE CONNECTIONS

Chronic Disease Connections is an e-bulletin created for healthcare systems and providers working to prevent and manage chronic disease with a particular focus on blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol control.



Colorectal Cancer Screening

45 is the new 50! Due to an increased rise in colorectal cancer (CRC) among young and middle-aged people, the recommended age to begin screening was lowered from age 50 to 45 for average-risk individuals. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and reminds us of the importance of CRC screening, cancer prevention and early detection. CRC remains the second-leading cause of cancer-related death for men and women combined, despite being often being preventable through screening. About 1 in 3 adults ages 50 and older, about 38 million people, are not getting screened as recommended (NCCRT).

Fortunately, there are several high-quality screening tests for CRC, including colonoscopy and at-home tests, such as stool tests and Cologuard. Screening continues to be recommended until age 75. Other evidence-based ways to increase cancer screening rates in clinical settings include patient reminders, one-on-one patient education, and provider reminder/recall systems.

Additional information and tools are available with the following resources:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).
- [The Iowa Get Screened, Colorectal Cancer Program](#) provides information and resources about screening in Iowa, signs, symptoms and risk factors.
- [The National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable \(NCCRT\)](#) provides resources for healthcare professionals, patients, communities, policymakers and targeted audiences.
- [Insurance Coverage](#): Most health insurance plans including Medicaid and Medicare cover CRC screenings.
- [Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month](#) activities and resources for March.
- [The American Cancer Society](#) has information about colorectal cancer screening options and when patients should be screened. ■

HEALTH OBSERVANCES

FEBRUARY

- American Heart Month
- Children's Dental Health Month
- National Wear Red Day
-February 3
- Black History Month
- National Caregivers Day
-February 17

MARCH

- Brain Injury Awareness Month
- American Diabetes Alert Day
-March 28
- LGBTQ Health Awareness Week
-March 20-24
- Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day
-March 8

APRIL

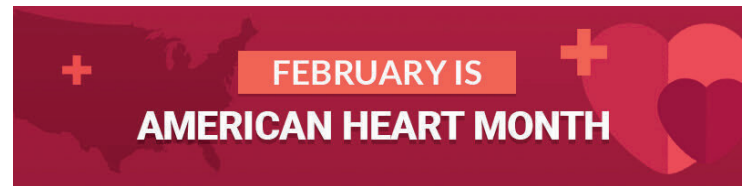
- National Public Health Week
April 3-9
- National Minority Health Month
- World Health Day
April 7
- Parkinson's Awareness Month

Oral Health is Heart Health

Unhealthy mouth? Unhealthy you! There are over six **billion** bacteria living inside your mouth. While some are part of your normal microbiota, others facilitate disease and inflammation. This becomes problematic as the bacteria in the mouth travel throughout the body and cause damage over time. Pathogenic bacteria create an inflammatory response in the body, which can cause blood vessel damage and clots, and increase risks of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) and Stroke. An accumulation of bad bacteria also exacerbates chronic health conditions such as diabetes, lung disease, and increases risk the of sepsis.

Fortunately, the accumulation of this bad bacteria is *preventable*. Good oral hygiene practices and appropriate dental care can reduce the risks of CVD and Stroke as well as improve overall health outcomes! Providers can support these efforts by asking their patients if they have seen a dentist for a preventive visit in the past twelve months. Encouraging regular dental visits is a great way to start the conversation.

To learn more about the impact of oral health on chronic disease, contact the Bureau of Oral Health and Delivery Systems at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services at ohds@idph.iowa.gov.



Heart Health & COVID-19

Celebrate American Heart Month this February by raising awareness about the impact of heart disease and motivating others to adopt healthy lifestyles that prevent heart disease. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States and Iowa.

The novel coronavirus has impacted cardiovascular health from the beginning and now is showing to substantially increase the risk of heart problems even one year after COVID-19 infection. Researchers have found that after one year, those who had COVID-19 were 63% more likely to have cardiovascular issues, leading to about 45 additional cases per 1,000 people. Problems such as irregular heartbeats, heart failure, coronary disease, heart attacks, and more can occur.

Encourage patients to not only get vaccinated, but also prioritize sleep and pay attention to lingering symptoms. And of course, patients should know the signs of heart attack and stroke, and see a doctor as necessary.

For more resources about heart health and COVID-19, visit the CDC and the American Heart Association.

Join Us for the February 2023 Heart Month Webinar Series

All healthcare professionals are invited to the 2023 Heart Month "Adopting and Implementing Protocols for Hypertension Control" - Webinar Series. Presented by the Iowa HHS Heart Disease and Stroke and Care For Yourself-WISEWOMAN Programs, this two-part webinar series will provide an engaging opportunity to learn from local health care professionals about the latest healthcare protocols and interventions for identifying undiagnosed hypertension and practical implementation of team-based care for hypertension control. Free to attend. CME credits are available with live attendance.

Adopting and Implementing Protocols to Identify Undiagnosed Hypertension

Presentation with Q&A

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, from 12-1pm - [Register here](#)

and

Adopting and Implementing Protocols on Team Based Care for Hypertension Control

Presentation & Panel Discussion with Q&A

Tuesday, February 21, 2023, from 12- 1pm - [Register here](#)

**Registration
Now!**

Diabetes Alert Day - Time for a Wake-Up Call!

March 28th is American Diabetes Association Alert Day. Observed annually, Diabetes Alert Day acts as a "wake-up call" that focuses on the seriousness of diabetes and the importance of understanding one's risk of diabetes. This chronic disease continues to affect millions of people across the country and is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States. Over 37 million adults in the US have diabetes, but about 1 in 5 Americans living with diabetes, 8.5 million people, are unaware that they have the disease. Today, more than 8 in 10 adults living with prediabetes don't know they have it.

Fortunately, diabetes can be prevented and managed. Improved awareness of risk factors and lifestyle modifications can lower the risk of developing diabetes as well as manage the disease. Talk to your patients about their risk for diabetes, and educate them about diabetes prevention and management strategies that fit each individual.



For more information about American Diabetes Alert Day, visit the [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease](#). Share the [Diabetes Risk Test](#) and other [resources](#) with your patients. Find local diabetes prevention and management programs on the [Iowa HHS website](#).

NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

Interactive Heart Health Activities

February is Heart Month - an opportunity to raise awareness about heart health and the prevention of heart disease. The Iowa Heart Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to improving heart health education and dedicated to the prevention of heart disease. The Foundation has created a collection of [interactive activities](#) that can be utilized with youth to educate them on heart health. Explore these activities and consider implementing one during heart month at one of your outreach events.

For additional information, contact info@iowaheartfoundation.org.



Iowa Cancer Plan Released

The Iowa Cancer Plan provides direction for planning, implementing, and evaluating cancer control programs, research, and policy initiatives related to cancer prevention and control. The plan is revised every five years. The newly revised plan is available on the [Iowa Cancer Consortium website](#). A [video series](#) accompanies the new cancer plan and showcases real lowans' work are doing to reduce the burden of cancer in our state.



ALA's State of Lung Cancer Screening Report for Iowa

The American Lung Association released information about the state of lung cancer screening in Iowa. [The State of Lung Cancer report](#) examines the rates of new cases, survival, early diagnosis, surgical treatment, lack of treatment, and screening for each state, and indicates that states must do more to protect residents from lung cancer.

Screening for cancer can help save lives if detected early. Unfortunately, many patients who qualify for lung cancer screening are not being screened. Consider encouraging your patients for screenings at their next visit.

Patients are considered to be at "high risk" for developing lung cancer and recommended for screening if the following criteria is met:

- Age 50-80
- Have a 20 pack-year history of smoking (this means 1 pack a day for 20 years, 2 packs a day for 10 years, etc.)
- AND, are a current smoker, or have quit within the last 15 years



CONTACT US

To submit webinars, events, funding opportunities, or health promotion news, contact Heart Disease and Stroke Coordinator, McKyla Carson, at mckyla.carson@idph.iowa.gov. View previous Chronic Disease Connections E-Bulletin issues [here](#).