

ABC's 7 STEPS TO A HEALTHY HEART

1. Be Spiritually Active
2. Take Charge of Your Blood Pressure
3. Control Your Cholesterol
4. Track Your Blood Sugar and Maintain Recommended Weight
5. Eat Smart and Enjoy Regular Exercise
6. Don't Smoke
7. Access Excellent Healthcare and Take Medication as Prescribed



Super Weekend 2007

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For the third year, AstraZeneca (AZ) and the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) joined forces to educate and empower minorities to combat the ravages of cardiovascular disease in their communities. The ABC is entirely committed to lowering the high rate of cardiovascular disease in minority populations. Their mantra is that “Children Deserve to Know Their Grandparents so they will become GREAT grandparents.” According to Dr. Waine Kong, who has been the CEO of the ABC for 21 years, “Since cardiovascular disease account for up to 50% of the death of African American grandparents, we must attack this community health problem with both feet. This program has that impact”

From April 20-22, 2007, the AZ/ABC partnership launched the five city “Super Weekend” tour in Phoenix, Arizona moved on to Memphis, Tennessee (April 27-29), Columbus, Ohio (May 4-6), Dallas, Texas (May 18-20) and concluded in Boston, Massachusetts (June 8-10).

The Super Week-end program begins with a Community Leadership Forum. Politicians, physicians, nurses, public health officials, religious leaders, members of the Black Chamber of Commerce, head of clubs and organizations are briefed on the impact of heart disease on themselves, their families and their communities. They are then invited to become more active and supportive of efforts to prevent heart disease and stroke. A map showing the hot spots where the relative rates of CVD is shared. Unfortunately, minority communities always coincide with the areas where the rate of CVD is the highest. Why should where one live determine their health



status? Each attendee receives a copy of coffee table book, “Why Children Should Know Their Grandparents.”

On the following Saturday, with music, talks by community physicians, a Super Weekend Community Health Fair is offered where free tests are offered for blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, weight, and body mass index and educational materials are liberally shared with those who participate. Additionally, heart healthy food is offered to make the point that “what’s good for you can also taste good”. Door prizes are offered throughout the day to motivate participation.

The program close on Sunday, when doctors take to the pulpit of community churches to bring a message about the “Seven Steps to Good Health” developed by the ABC.

1. Be spiritually active. According to a study from the University of Texas, African Americans who go to church regularly live 14 years longer than African Americans who do not go to church. Apparently, the fellowship, good will, meditation, inspirational words and singing together contributes to this increased life expectancy.
2. Take charge of your blood pressure. Tell your doctor you want to keep your blood pressure at goal (120/80mm Hg). Despite steady progress over the past fifty years, it is frightening to contemplate the potential for a global epidemic as the rate of uncontrolled high blood pressure is projected to increase by 60% over the next twenty years.

3. Control your cholesterol. Keep your HDL high (>50), and your LDL (<70), and total cholesterol low (<200). High cholesterol leads to plaque which restricts the flow of blood. Diet, exercise, and statin therapy are the keys to maintaining healthy cholesterol levels.
4. Track your blood sugar and maintain ideal weight. Obesity and diabetes track each other. As the rate of obesity goes up or down, so does diabetes. If you are overweight, you run a very high risk of developing diabetes which increases your risk of heart attacks, strokes, blindness, amputations and impotence. Your fasting plasma glucose should be <75 and your hemoglobin A1C should be less than 7.
5. Enjoy regular exercise (30 minutes per day-every day) and follow a sensible diet! Move those muscles. Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables, reduce fats and sugars but most of all, eat less. Every little bit you do can either help or hurt your health a little bit.
6. Don't smoke. Nobody argues with this anymore, not even smokers. It constricts the arteries, increase carbon monoxide in the body, lower the good cholesterol, makes a chimney of your nose and the primary cause of lung cancer. Smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death in the United States.
7. Access better health care and faithfully take your medication as prescribed. It is no longer acceptable for the most vulnerable among us to receive the worst care. Just because some of us are poor does not mean we should be relegated to poor care. All members of society deserve to receive respectful, culturally competent health care. If you are unhappy with the care you are receiving, go somewhere else. And it does no good for you to go to physicians, have your condition diagnosed and medication

prescribed if you don't fill the prescription and take it as directed by your doctor. If you cannot afford the cost of your prescription, your doctor can help you get these medicines free. This is the United States of America; no one should go without proper medical care.

Prior to the launch of the program in each city, a frenzy of community organization and public relations activities take place. Religious leaders are asked to allow physicians to speak to their congregation, physicians sign up to speak to churches and given a script and the radio was used liberally for advertising. ABC members were guests on TV hyping the program and print media was employed to promote the health fair. Dallas had the most active media campaign.

The average attendance for the Friday evening community forum was over one hundred with Columbus leading the way with 125. Over 140 people were screened at each site with Phoenix doing the most and ten thousand church members heard the heart healthy "mini-sermons" or "health messages" focused on eliminating stroke, heart disease and premature death." Memphis had the most churches participating.

"We hit a home run with our Super week-end program," said Dr. Gerald DeVaughn, President of the ABC. "We started our Super Weekends 2005 and have since added more depth and components to make it more responsive to the needs of the community. This is a win-win for Astra Zeneca and these communities that will decrease premature deaths and health care disparities as well as increase quality of life."

