

Script – Broadcast – Take it to heart: cardiovascular disease remains leading cause of death

INTRO

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States. That's from a new [study](#) in Circulation, a journal published by the American Heart Association (AHA).

According to the AHA, 941,00 people died from heart disease in the U.S. in 2022. Cancer deaths are second followed by accidental deaths.

Nancy Dagefoerde is a nurse practitioner with OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute who closely monitors these trends. While the findings weren't surprising, Dagefoerde says it's a great reminder to patients and clinicians that heart health remains a top priority.

(((SOT)))

Nancy Dagefoerde, (DAG-A-FERD) nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute

"It gives us information to talk to our patients about and for the public to see things that they might want to work on. I think many people are concerned about other illnesses like cancer, but then we have these reports that tell us heart disease is still leading cause of death." (:16)

VO

There are several risk factors for heart disease. The greatest risk is genetics, followed by threats that are preventable such as diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure, stress, lack of exercise and obesity. Nearly 47% of U.S. adults have high blood pressure, 57% have Type 2 diabetes or prediabetes and 42% have obesity.

There is, however, some good news. High cholesterol rates have declined over the past few years. Dagefoerde credits that to more awareness about diet and lifestyle factors, as well as medications used to control cholesterol. And smoking rates are also on the decline. That includes both cigarettes and e-cigarette use.

TAG

While there has been some progress, experts warn that if recent trends continue, hypertension, obesity and diabetes will reach staggering numbers. This will greatly impact people's health as they age.

Dagefoerde adds that 80% of heart problems can be prevented. It starts by working on lifestyle issues – diet, exercise, sleep, no smoking and limit your alcohol consumption. It starts by educating yourself and working with your doctor to develop a plan.