

Did You Know?

February 2020

A Heart for Health: February is National Heart Health Month. The heart serves as the epicenter for our circulatory system and aids the body in distributing blood, oxygen, and other nutrients. When a person introduces a substance into their system, it can disrupt the body's normal pattern and negatively affect a user's heart. Over time substance use can lead to long term health issues, many of which are life-threatening and irreversible. The Center for Disease and Prevention (CDC) reports that, "heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States." About every 37 seconds, one person in the United States dies from heart disease.

What You Should Know:

- The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) shares that drinking at high levels repeatedly can damage the heart and lead to health complications such as:
 - Cardiomyopathy – Stretching and drooping of heart muscle
 - Arrhythmias – Irregular heart beat
 - Stroke
 - High blood pressure
- Normally the human heart rate consists of 70-80 heartbeats per minute. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reports that with the presence of cannabis a user's heart rate may increase by 20-50 beats per minute, and in some cases even double. Increased heart rates can last hours for a user, and is often linked to the development of heart disease.
- A study Published by the Radiological Society found a link between vaping and reduced blood flow throughout the body- an effect that lasted over an hour for participants of the study. With repeated use, damage to our bodies' blood vessels caused by vaping has been shown to lead to serious heart problems (i.e. heart disease and heart attack).

What You Can Do:

- **Make A Change:** it's never too late or too early to start making healthy choices. Take time to look over your current habits and evaluate their consequences. In regards to substance use, starting a journey of abstinence may be necessary for best health, or maybe it's as simple as cutting back on consumption. Either way, find what's healthiest for you.
- **Find Your Allies:** When making life-changes, it's important to have a support system. Know who your allies are, in terms of both personal relationships and community organizations. If you fear that you or a loved one might be at risk for or is suffering from a substance use disorder, seek help and contact your local prevention agency. **The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (ECCPASA) can be reached by dialing 716-831-2298.**
- **Be A Friend For Prevention:** According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) more than 23 million American suffer from a use disorder, and of those 23 million only 25% receive treatment. A large barrier for those in need accessing treatment is fear and stigma. Raise awareness and reach out to those in need. Connect with your local prevention providers and ask how you can get involved in the fight against stigma.



Information obtained from: www.cdc.gov; www.drugabuse.gov; www.niaaa.nih.gov; www.nih.gov