

February is :

- American Heart Month
- African Heritage & Health Week (February 1-7)
- Women's Heart Week (February 1-7)
- Heart Problems After COVID-19
- Black History Month



FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH: HEART-HEALTHY TIPS FOR SENIORS

We often associate the month of February with hearts because of Valentine's Day. However, there's another reason we should think about hearts in February; it's American Heart Month. February is designated as American Heart Month to advocate cardiovascular health and raise awareness about heart disease.

American Heart Month is a wonderful opportunity to focus our attention on ways to promote and maintain heart health. Since 1963, American Heart Month has been celebrated as a way to educate Americans to join the battle against heart disease.

WHAT SENIORS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS CAN LEARN FROM AMERICAN HEART MONTH

February is the perfect time to learn more about your heart, how to take care of it, and how to detect signals of cardiovascular disease. And there are ways that seniors and our elderly adults can fully embrace heart health.



In honor of American Heart Month, we will take a look at some of the ways you can help improve your heart health. Even if you're currently living with heart disease, there are many things you can do to improve your odds of living a long and healthful life.

In His Service,

H-3 Ministry



*"A merry heart [a]does good, like medicine,
But a broken spirit dries the bones."*

Proverbs 17 : 22



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WHAT IS HEART DISEASE?

The phrases "heart disease" and "cardiovascular disease" are used interchangeably to describe the various conditions that affect your heart. Heart or cardiovascular diseases include blood vessel diseases, heart rhythm problems, and congenital heart defects.

The most common form of heart disease in the United States is coronary artery disease (CAD), which occurs when the arteries that supply blood to the heart become hardened and narrowed due to a buildup of cholesterol, known as plaque. CAD can lead to health issues such as heart attack, heart failure, angina (chest pain), stroke, and irregular heartbeat.

FACTS ABOUT HEART DISEASE

Every year, one in four people will die from heart disease. Heart disease can strike anyone, but certain individuals may be more at risk than others. Some of the most common risk factors for heart disease include:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Poor diet
- Inactive lifestyle
- Cigarette smoking
- Excessive alcohol consumption



Heart disease is still the main source of death in the United States. In fact, cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in the world. And according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), many of these deaths would have been preventable with proper preventative care.

Many people believe that cardiovascular diseases (CVD) inevitably comes with old age, there are many things that seniors can do to strengthen their heart and circulatory system.

KNOWING THE SYMPTOMS OF HEART DISEASE



While there are several different forms of heart disease, they share common symptoms and warning signs. It's important to learn these symptoms to receive a prompt diagnosis and medical treatment. Symptoms of an emergency may include:

- Chest pain, discomfort or an uncomfortable pressure in the chest
- Shortness of breath
- Pain in the upper body, arms, back, neck, jaw or upper stomach
- Feeling nauseous or vomiting
- Sweating; or cold sweats
- Weakness, light-headedness, feeling faint or dizzy
- Feeling very full or having indigestion
- Fatigue or exhaustion
- An irregular heartbeat, palpitations, or increased heart rate

HOW YOU CAN HELP TO PREVENT HEART DISEASE

Risk factors often develop as you age; things such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol increase your chances of having a stroke or developing heart disease. Whether your senior loved ones live at home, in an assisted living community or at a nursing home, you can make healthy changes to lower the risk of developing heart disease. Likewise, controlling and preventing risk factors are that much more important if you already suffer from heart disease.



Luckily, there are many ways to keep your heart in great shape, even as you age. Although statistics show that heart disease risks increase with age, with correct, healthy lifestyle habits and a heart-healthy diet, you can help protect your senior loved ones.

HEART-HEALTHY HABITS FOR SENIORS



The American Heart Association provides Heart Healthy Tips for Seniors for improving your heart health. It's possible to reduce the risk for heart disease by making certain lifestyle changes, and managing medical conditions sooner rather than later.

You can keep your heart healthy no matter how old you are, by making changes in your everyday habits. Here's how to get started:

- **GET ENOUGH EXERCISE.** Physical activity is one of the best ways to improve heart health. The American Heart Association recommends that individuals perform at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise.
- **QUIT SMOKING.** If you're still smoking, it's time to quit. There are many benefits to living a smoke-free life including improved circulation, reduced risk of certain types of cancer, and feeling more energetic.
- **EAT A HEART-HEALTHY DIET.** Load up on fresh fruits and vegetables while limiting saturated fats, salt, and foods containing cholesterol, like fatty meats. A Mediterranean diet focuses on eating a diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and fish and seafood instead of red and processed meats.
- **WATCH YOUR NUMBERS.** Get regular check-ups to monitor health conditions that affect the heart, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes, and make sure they're under control with medication.
- **REDUCE YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE.** Excess alcohol consumption can worsen health conditions that contribute to heart disease, such as high blood pressure, arrhythmias, and high cholesterol levels.
- **WATCH YOUR WEIGHT.** To help prevent heart disease, maintain a healthy body weight for your size. Too many pounds can add up to increased heart disease risk.
- **GET BETTER SLEEP.** It's critical for seniors (and everyone) to have a good night's sleep. Most experts say that seniors should sleep between seven and nine hours each night. Sleep is beneficial for brain functionality, metabolism, immune functionality and emotional well-being.

- **REDUCE STRESS FACTORS.** According studies, stress can compound many heart disease risks that older adults already face, like high blood pressure. Take the time to find healthy outlets to relieve stress and lower your risk of heart disease.

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR HEART DISEASE RISKS

Many health conditions can contribute to heart disease and increase your risk of having a heart attack. Heart disease treatment and heart attack prevention requires that you treat all other contributing health problems and keep them under control. To treat heart disease you should:

1. Lower high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels;
2. Keep diabetes under control;
3. Take prescribed medications that can help treat the various aspects of heart disease; nitrates, beta-blockers, and calcium channel blockers may be recommended. Your doctor may also suggest taking a daily aspirin to help reduce the risk of a heart attack;
4. If your aging parent or loved one is struggling to maintain their day to day activities and lifestyle, you may require help from a caregiver. Caregivers can provide care on an as-needed basis, and will also help encourage as much independence and activity (in or out of the home) as possible.



With increased awareness, education and lifestyle changes, we can help more Americans live longer, fuller, healthier lives and be an advocate for healthy habits.

American Heart Month should be used as a reminder to take care of your body and your health as you age, to reduce your risk of developing heart disease and other health conditions. It's never too late to start living a healthy lifestyle and reducing your heart disease risks!



5 WAYS TO CELEBRATE AFRICAN HERITAGE & HEALTH WEEK

February 1st-7th is African Heritage & Health Week and the first week of Black History Month. African Heritage & Health Week is the ideal time to learn more about your heritage. This week also offers a great opportunity to take a closer look at your health. Taking steps to protect your health helps your family and your community flourish.

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WHAT IS AFRICAN HERITAGE & HEALTH WEEK?

African Heritage & Health Week celebrations often focus on food. African American cuisine draws inspiration from Africa, the Caribbean, and the American South. This week is a great time to try out new flavors or cooking techniques.

If you want to improve your diet, there's no better time than African Heritage & Health Week. The traditional African diet focuses on beans, seeds, nuts, fruits, and vegetables. These foods can reduce the risk of many health problems.

African Heritage & Health Week also draws attention to medical problems that affect African American communities. Chronic health conditions [like diabetes and heart disease](#) are common among African Americans. People of African descent may also be at risk for certain genetic disorders. During this week, you can explore your unique health risks and learn to protect your health.

WHAT HEALTH CONCERNS AFFECT AFRICAN AMERICANS?

African Americans are at a high risk of heart disease and strokes. [Obesity](#), [diabetes](#), and [hypertension](#) are also common in African American communities. African Americans are more likely to suffer from [weight-related health problems](#). Unfortunately, they're also less likely to receive the care they need.

African Americans are also at a higher risk for kidney disease and lung problems, with African American men [50% more likely](#) than white men to get lung cancer and more likely to die from various cancers.

Many of these conditions are linked to poverty, poor diet, or a lack of access to healthcare. Genetic factors can also play a role. You might not be able to do much about your genetic risks, but preventive care and enjoying an active lifestyle both play a huge role in helping you live a healthy and long life.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MY HEALTH RISKS?

Your family medicine doctor can determine whether you're at risk for certain diseases. During each visit, your doctor collects information about your medical history. He or she also considers important factors, like your age, weight, or race. These factors help your doctor decide which health screenings you need.

As part of your exam, your doctor may recommend blood or imaging tests. These tests are the best way to diagnose conditions like diabetes and kidney disease. They also provide valuable information about your cancer and stroke risk. Tests and routine screenings help you stay in control of your health.

You can also protect your health at home. Your doctor may recommend self-exams to check for signs of cancer. You might also need to check your blood pressure or blood sugar each day. Your doctor can explain how to track these measurements at home.

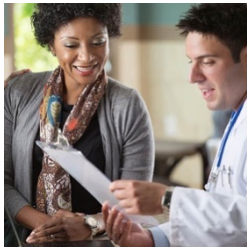
HOW CAN I PROTECT MY HEALTH?

African Americans are more likely to suffer from diet-related health problems than white people. A registered dietitian can [help you manage your dietary needs](#). Your dietitian considers your health risks and develops a healthy-eating plan. Seeing a dietitian can help you manage your weight and improve your health.

Prenatal care is also important in African American communities. African American women are at a [higher risk for pregnancy complications](#). If you're expecting, routine prenatal care keeps you and your baby healthy. Your obstetrician should support you throughout your pregnancy and delivery.

Mental illness may be underdiagnosed in African American communities, but mental health problems can have a big impact on your health. If you struggle with feelings of anxiety or depression, [counseling can help](#). A counselor can also help you cope with family problems, substance abuse, or past trauma.

5 WAYS TO CELEBRATE AFRICAN HERITAGE & HEALTH WEEK



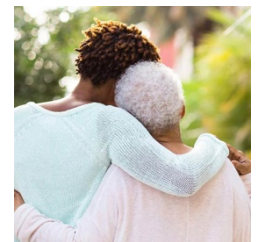
SCHEDULE A VISIT WITH YOUR DOCTOR

Protecting your health is the best way to support your community. If it's been a while since your last medical exam, [schedule a visit with your doctor](#). During your visit, ask about cancer screenings and routine blood tests.

Encourage your loved ones to visit the doctor, too. African Americans are less likely to receive preventive care than white people, but preventive care helps diagnose health problems while they're still treatable. The sooner you receive care, the better your chances of recovery.

CHECK ON FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Many people in the African American community struggle to talk about mental illness. Support from the community can help address these issues. This week, reach out to loved ones and ask how they're feeling. If your loved one is facing a personal struggle, offer your help and support.



ATTEND A COMMUNITY EVENT

Local events are a great way to build a strong community. Take a look at community websites, social media accounts, or a local newspaper. There may be some exciting events at nearby churches, schools, or nonprofit organizations. Take your family and join in these events. Community events help forge new friendships and show support for people living nearby.

TRY OUT A NEW DISH

African American communities have a rich heritage filled with delicious foods. During African Heritage & Health Week, explore African dishes you haven't tried before. Traditional African foods are often healthy and nutritious. Cook a new recipe and test it out with your family.



SHARE A MEAL WITH LOVED ONES

When you have a busy schedule, it's tempting to skip family mealtimes, but eating with your family offers many health benefits. Researchers have found that children who enjoy family meals do better in school. They're also less likely to experience substance abuse or teen pregnancy.

Families that eat together are also less likely to be overweight. Your family can share in these benefits by eating at least one meal together each day.

Don't miss out on the fun events taking place during African Heritage & Health Week. Get involved in your community and learn what you can do to improve your family's health.

WOMEN'S HEART WEEK

Women's Heart Week during the first week of February promotes education, prevention, symptoms awareness and early intervention to lead women to healthy hearts.

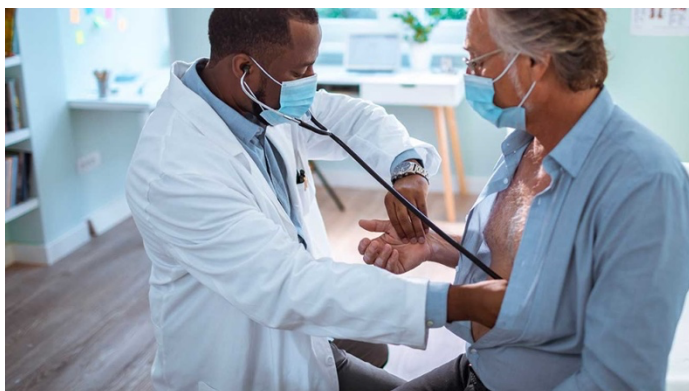
healtheo360° Presents

Heart Disease in Women

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) is the #1 killer in men and women.

1 in every 4 women dies from heart disease.

CAD is the leading cause of heart attacks



HEART PROBLEMS AFTER COVID-19

For people who have had COVID-19, lingering COVID-19 heart problems can complicate their recovery.

Some of the symptoms common in coronavirus “long-haulers,” such as palpitations, dizziness, chest

pain and shortness of breath, may be due to heart problems — or, just from having been ill with COVID-19. How do you tell if your symptoms are heart-related, and what can you expect if they are?

Cardiologist Wendy Post, M.D., clarifies which post-coronavirus symptoms may point to a heart issue, when to call your doctor, and other facts all long-term COVID-19 survivors should know.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE HEART ISSUES AFTER COVID-19?

COVID-19, the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, can damage heart muscle and affect heart function.

There are several reasons for this. The cells in the heart have angiotensin converting enzyme-2 (ACE-2) receptors where the coronavirus attaches before entering cells. Heart damage can also be due to high levels of inflammation circulating in the body. As the body's immune system fights off the virus, the inflammatory process can damage some healthy tissues, including the heart.

Coronavirus infection also affects the inner surfaces of veins and arteries, which can cause blood vessel inflammation, damage to very small vessels and blood clots, all of which can compromise blood flow to the heart or other parts of the body. “Severe COVID-19 is a disease that affects endothelial cells, which form the lining of the blood vessels,” Post says.

HEART RATE AND COVID-19

After you have had COVID-19, if you are experiencing a rapid heartbeat or palpitations you should contact your doctor. A temporary increase in heart rate can be caused by a lot of different things, including dehydration. Make sure you are drinking enough fluids, especially if you have a fever. Symptoms of a rapid or irregular heart rhythm may include:

- Feeling your heart beat rapidly or irregularly in your chest ([palpitations](#))
- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy, especially upon standing
- Chest discomfort

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS THAT I MAY HAVE DEVELOPED A HEART PROBLEM AFTER COVID-19?

“There are many symptoms reported in the post-COVID period, and there are multiple potential causes for these symptoms,” says Post.

“Severe fatigue is common after infection with the coronavirus, just as it is after any serious illness. Many people experience shortness of breath, chest pain or palpitations. Any of these problems could be related to the heart, but they could also be due to other factors, including the aftermath of being very ill, prolonged inactivity and spending weeks convalescing in bed,” she says.

POTS after COVID-19. People recovering from the coronavirus sometimes show symptoms of a condition known as [POTS \(postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome\)](#). Researchers are exploring whether or not there is a link.

POTS isn't directly a cardiac problem, but a neurologic one that affects the part of the nervous system that regulates heart rate and blood flow. The syndrome can cause rapid heartbeats when you stand up, which can lead to brain fog, fatigue, palpitations, lightheadedness and other symptoms.

IS A HEART ATTACK MORE LIKELY AFTER COVID-19?

That depends: Post says that “heart attack” has several different forms. A type 1 heart attack, caused by a blood clot blocking one of the heart's arteries, is rare during or after COVID-19 infection.

“Type 2 heart attacks are more common with COVID-19,” she says. “This heart attack can be caused by increased stress on the heart, such as a fast heartbeat, low blood oxygen levels or anemia, because the heart muscle isn't getting enough oxygen delivered in the blood in order to do this extra work. We have seen this in people with acute coronavirus disease, but it is less common in those who have survived the illness.”

“Blood tests have shown that during COVID-19, some people have elevated levels of a substance called troponin in their blood, along with EKG changes and chest pain.” Elevated troponin levels are a sign of damaged heart tissue. Sometimes this is from a heart attack. This is less commonly seen after COVID-19.

“During acute COVID-19, elevated troponin levels with an abnormal EKG are linked to higher mortality, but not in patients with a normal EKG,” Post says.

WHAT ABOUT HEART PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN AFTER COVID-19?

In general, children who get sick with the coronavirus do not have serious problems as often as adults do. An uncommon but serious complication of COVID-19 called [multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, or MIS-C](#), can cause serious heart damage, cardiogenic shock or death.

Some children who survive MIS-C can be left with abnormal heart rhythms and stiffened heart muscle that prevents the heart from relaxing normally and beating properly. MIS-C has some similar characteristics to Kawasaki disease.

WHEN SHOULD I SEE A DOCTOR IF I'M HAVING HEART SYMPTOMS AFTER CORONAVIRUS?

SYMPTOM CHART

Symptom	When to call 911	When to call your doctor
Shortness of breath	Oxygen saturation reading under 92% Bluish lips or face Sudden onset	Worse when lying down Worse on exertion Accompanied by fatigue or ankle swelling
Chest pain	Severe chest pain Accompanied by nausea, shortness of breath, lightheadedness or sweating Sudden chest pain, especially with shortness of breath lasting more than five minutes	Persistent, nonsevere pain Increasing in frequency New chest pain that resolves in 15 minutes (otherwise call 911) New exertional chest pain relieved by rest

SHORTNESS OF BREATH OR CHEST PAIN AFTER COVID-19: ARE THESE SIGNS OF AN EMERGENCY?

SHORTNESS OF BREATH

"You want to consult a doctor if any of your symptoms are severe, especially shortness of breath," Post says. She recommends using a commercially available O2 (oxygen) saturation monitor.

"Shortness of breath by itself is not always a sign of a serious problem, but if you have that symptom along with low O2 (below 92%), that is a reason to be concerned." Sometimes people are short of breath with exertion after COVID-19 because they have been less active for a long time and need to gradually build their fitness level back up.

COVID-19 CHEST PAIN

What about lingering chest pain, another common post-COVID complaint? "Chest pain may be nothing serious, but if you are having severe chest pain, get help, especially if it is persistent or if you are also having nausea, shortness of breath or lightheadedness: These could be [symptoms of a heart attack](#)."

"If you have chest pain when you inhale, you might have lung inflammation. Sudden, severe chest pain could be a [blood clot in the lung \(pulmonary embolism\)](#)," Post says.

FAMILY DOCTOR OR CARDIOLOGIST?

If your symptoms are not severe but you want to be checked out, Post says a cardiologist doesn't need to be your first stop if you've never had heart problems before and are not at risk. "For nonemergency post-COVID-19 symptoms, your primary care practitioner can advise you," she says.

HEART FAILURE AND COVID-19

A diagnosis of [heart failure](#) after COVID-19 is rare. But if you have shortness of breath or leg swelling after COVID-19, you should contact your doctor, who may recommend evaluation by a cardiologist if tests indicate you are at risk.

A sign of heart failure is shortness of breath, but this has many other potential causes, including COVID-related pneumonia and other noncardiac causes. Symptoms of heart failure may include:

- Shortness of breath, especially with exertion
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath when lying down
- Leg swelling
- Frequent urination at night (Note: frequent urination at night in men is a common symptom of an enlarged prostate.)

IS HEART DAMAGE CAUSED BY COVID-19 PERMANENT?

Post says that if symptoms are due to a cardiac cause, recovery depends on the severity of injury. “Very few people have a severe heart attack, such as an acute [myocardial infarction, or MI](#), due to COVID-19,” she says.

Still, heart imaging can reveal minor changes in the heart muscle of some COVID-19 survivors. Post notes that some studies on athletes recovering from the coronavirus have shown some scarring, but stresses that some of these studies did not compare these results with those who had not had COVID-19. How long these minor changes persist — and how they affect heart health — are not yet known. Experts are developing protocols and recommendations for which athletes should get cardiac testing before returning to play.

COVID-19 can also affect the strength of the heart pumping, Post says, but subtle abnormalities in heart pumping are not likely to cause people problems.

A person recovering from COVID-19 may benefit from physical therapy, [breathing exercises](#), and most of all, time. Post advises anyone recovering from COVID-19 should expect a gradual course of recovery, and should not expect a rapid return to their normal activity levels.

CAN HAVING COVID-19 MAKE AN EXISTING HEART CONDITION WORSE?

“A heart condition could be exacerbated by severe COVID, but not likely after mild or asymptomatic cases,” Post says. “But the effects of the coronavirus on preexisting heart disease are not yet known.”

CAN HEART PROBLEMS SHOW UP LONG AFTER COVID-19 RECOVERY?

If you have had COVID-19, recovered and feel all right now, should you worry? Are heart problems likely to show up later on?

Post emphasizes that many of these questions do not have clear answers yet. SARS-CoV-2 was isolated in 2019, and the vast majority of COVID-19 survivors have only been recovering for several months. It is hard to know exactly how the disease will affect people’s hearts long term, and this is just one area of intense concern among researchers.

She mentions that the National Institutes of Health is working with dozens of academic medical institutions to track COVID-19 survivors' health. Study groups, such as one called C4R, are consolidating patient data to help predict the long-term impact of the coronavirus on health and continuing care.

TOO MUCH CHOLESTEROL IN YOUR BLOOD INCREASES YOUR RISK.
 GET TESTED TO LEARN YOUR TOTAL CHOLESTEROL, GOOD (HDL) AND BAD (LDL) CHOLESTEROL, AND TRIGLICERIDES.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY BOOSTS YOUR RISK EVEN IF YOU HAVE NO OTHER RISK FACTORS.
AIM FOR 2 1/2 HOURS OF MODERATE-INTENSITY AEROBIC ACTIVITY PER WEEK.

SMOKERS ARE UP TO 6 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO SUFFER HEART ATTACKS. DON'T SMOKE.
 VISIT SMOKEFREE.GOV FOR TOOLS TO HELP YOU QUIT.

HEARTTRUTH.GOV

ARE YOU AT RISK FOR HEART DISEASE?

THE HIGHER YOUR BODY MASS INDEX (BMI), THE HIGHER YOUR RISK FOR HEART DISEASE, ESPECIALLY AT BMI GREATER THAN 30.
MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE GREATLY INCREASES YOUR RISK.
 GET TESTED. REDUCE YOUR SODIUM INTAKE. STAY ACTIVE. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT.

DIABETES. PUTS YOU AT INCREASED RISK FOR HEART DISEASE.
 YOU CAN LOWER YOUR RISK BY KEEPING YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE CLOSE TO THE RECOMMENDED TARGET NUMBERS.²

THE heart TRUTH®
 A program of the National Institutes of Health

Sources: ¹ National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. (2005). *Your guide to a healthy heart.*, ² Diabetes Prevention Program Research Group (2002). Reduction in the incidence of type 2 diabetes with lifestyle intervention or metformin. *New England Journal of Medicine*, (346)6, 393-403.

HERE'S THE STORY BEHIND BLACK HISTORY MONTH — AND WHY IT'S CELEBRATED IN FEBRUARY



Every February, the U.S. honors the contributions and sacrifices of African Americans who have helped shape the nation. Black History Month celebrates the rich cultural heritage, triumphs and adversities that are an indelible part of our country's history.

This year's theme, *Black Health and Wellness*, pays homage to medical scholars and health care providers. The theme is especially timely as we enter the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected minority communities and placed unique burdens on Black health care professionals.

"There is no American history without African American history," said Sara Clarke Kaplan, executive director of the Antiracist Research & Policy Center at American University in Washington, D.C. The Black experience, she said, is embedded in "everything we think of as 'American history.'"

FIRST, THERE WAS NEGRO HISTORY WEEK

Critics have long argued that Black history should be taught and celebrated year-round, not just during one month each year.

It was Carter G. Woodson, the "father of Black history," who first set out in 1926 to designate a time to promote and educate people about Black history and culture, according to W. Marvin Dulaney. He is a historian and the president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).

Woodson envisioned a weeklong celebration to encourage the coordinated teaching of Black history in public schools. He designated the second week of February as Negro History Week and galvanized fellow historians through the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, which he founded in 1915. (ASNLH later became ASALH.)

The idea wasn't to place limitations but really to focus and broaden the nation's consciousness.



"Woodson's goal from the very beginning was to make the celebration of Black history in the field of history a 'serious area of study,'" said Albert Broussard, a professor of Afro-American history at Texas A&M University.

The idea eventually grew in acceptance, and by the late 1960s, Negro History Week had evolved into what is now known as Black History Month. Protests around racial injustice, inequality and anti-imperialism that were occurring in many parts of the U.S. were pivotal to the change.

Colleges and universities also began to hold commemorations, with Kent State University being one of the first, according to Kaplan.

Fifty years after the first celebrations, President Gerald R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month during the country's 1976 bicentennial. Ford called upon Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history," History.com reports.

WHY FEBRUARY WAS CHOSEN AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February was chosen primarily because the second week of the month coincides with the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Lincoln was influential in the emancipation of slaves, and Douglass, a former slave, was a prominent leader in the abolitionist movement, which fought to end slavery.

Lincoln and Douglass were each born in the second week of February, so it was traditionally a time when African Americans would hold celebrations in honor of emancipation, Kaplan said. (Douglass' exact date of birth wasn't recorded, but he came to celebrate it on Feb. 14.)

Thus, Woodson created Negro History Week around the two birthdays as a way of "commemorating the black past," according to ASALH.

Forty years after Ford formally recognized Black History Month, it was Barack Obama, the nation's first Black president, who delivered a message of his own from the White House, a place built by slaves.



"Black History Month shouldn't be treated as though it is somehow separate from our collective American history or somehow just boiled down to a compilation of greatest hits from the March on Washington or from some of our sports heroes," Obama said.

"It's about the lived, shared experience of all African Americans, high and low, famous and obscure, and how those experiences have shaped and challenged and ultimately strengthened America," he continued.

Resources:

<https://www.unicityhealthcare.com/february-american-heart-month/>

<https://nationaldaycalendar.com/womens-heart-week/>

<https://lompocvmc.com/blog/124-healthy-living/1228-5-ways-to-celebrate-african-heritage-health-week?locale=en>

<https://www.npr.org/2022/02/01/1075623826/why-is-february-black-history-month>

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/heart-problems-after-covid19>