



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
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## **February is American Heart Month**

Heart Disease effects more than the heart.

### **(Dixon, IL)**

February is American Heart Month, which highlights the prevalence of heart disease and other heart related issues. There are three significant factors for heart disease including high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking. Unfortunately, almost **half (49%)** of Americans have at least one of these risk factors.

Studies have shown that those suffering from heart disease also face increased risk of depression. One study, by Duke University Medical Center, found that those who had a heart attack were **3 times more likely** to suffer from depression than the general population. About 6.7% of adults aged 18 and older suffer each year from depression in the United States.

Researchers are not clear on the link; however, research has shown that depression lowers overall physical health. Feelings of hopelessness and fatigue affect our willingness to follow through with regular routines, including exercising and taking needed medication. Also, these issues make heart disease sufferers more likely to experience angina and heart attacks.

Signs of depression can include:

- Fatigue.
- Overeating or loss of appetite.
- Consistent feelings of anxiousness, sadness or loneliness.
- Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed.

However, if you or someone you love is suffering from heart disease, depression, or both, there are actions that can be taken to improve overall wellness.

### What Can We Do?

- Take care of our physical health.
  - Eat healthy foods.
  - Exercise.
  - Drink less alcohol, or none at all.
  - Quit smoking.
- **Seek help** from a mental health professional if you suspect you might be suffering from depression. Treatment works, recovery is possible.
- If a friend or loved one suffers from depression, encourage them to **seek treatment for the depression and encourage them to live a heart healthy lifestyle**, and even see a doctor about their coronary risk factors.
- If a friend or a loved one already has heart disease, **encourage them** to find out if they are suffering from depression and seek treatment if they are.

For more information on Heart Disease and depression, please visit [www.sinnissippi.com](http://www.sinnissippi.com). To learn more about programs and services, call Sinnissippi toll-free at 1-800-242-7642 or visit us online. Sinnissippi has office locations in Dixon, Mt. Carroll, Oregon, Rochelle and Sterling.

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