

CommUNITY HeartLink Houston

A Cardiovascular Community Resource Pocket Guide

Johnson&Johnson



CommUNITY HeartLink-Houston Pocket Guide: A Cardiovascular Community Resource

We at Johnson & Johnson aspire to transform lives by bringing lifesaving and life-changing solutions to people who need them. Our **CommUNITY HeartLink-Houston Resource** is an extension of our work and commitment.

We've compiled a curated list* of Houston-based cardiovascular disease (CVD) programs and services that address social determinants of health and leaned into our established initiatives such as *Our Race to Health Equity*, a \$100 million, five-year commitment to end racial and social injustice as a public health threat for people of color.

The CommUNITY HeartLink-Houston Resource contains tools to help support the navigation of Houston's healthcare landscape. With this guide, each one of us can help and empower CVD patients to "own" their health and increase health literacy. Our hope is that with these resources, you can better respond to the needs of overlooked and underserved Houston communities and help them achieve health equity. By doing so, we believe that a community of allies will be created who are committed to establishing a healthcare system in Houston that works for everyone.

*This list is not a complete list.



Understanding the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

The social determinants of health (SDOH) are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the environmental conditions that can impact the way people grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life such as economic policies, climate change, and political systems.¹

The COMMUNITY HeartLink-Houston Resource focuses on the following SDOHs:



Access to healthcare services

These **Helpful Houston & Community Resources** can help those encountering barriers when accessing healthcare services:

- [African American Health Coalition](#)
- [Harris County Public Health Department](#)
- [Texas Medicaid and CHIP](#)
- [African American Male Wellness Agency](#)



Housing

Access to safe, quality, affordable housing—and the supports to maintain that housing—is one of the most basic social determinants of health.²

These **Helpful Houston & Community Resources** can help provide emergency shelter as well as short-term, transitional, and permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness:

- [Harris County Community Services Department](#)
- [Harris County Public Health](#)



Transportation

Negative health effects related to the U.S. transportation system can fall hardest on vulnerable members of the community, such as low-income residents, minorities, children, persons with disabilities, and older adults.³

These **Helpful Houston & Community Resources** can help individuals access affordable and reachable transportation options:

- [Texas Health and Human Services Medical Transportation Program](#)
- [Link Houston](#)



Food access

Having access to nutritious food is a basic human need. A person experiences food insecurity when they have limited access to enough food and it impedes normal physical growth, becomes a barrier for having an active or healthy life, or impacts health outcomes.⁴

These **Helpful Houston & Community Resources** can help individuals access nutritious food to improve their diet and health outcomes:

- [Food Trust—Houston](#)
- [City of Houston Food Insecurity Board](#)
- [Houston Health Department's Farmers Markets and Food Access](#)
- [Urban Harvest Farmers Market](#)
- [Ivy Leaf Farms—Fresh Houwse Grocery](#)
- [Houston Food Bank Pantry Locator](#)





Cardiovascular Health Equity

One person dies every 33 seconds in the United States from cardiovascular disease.⁵

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for people in Texas, outpacing COVID-19, cancer, accidents and stroke.⁶ In Harris County, for every 100,000 people, 308 die of heart disease each year.⁷

Symptoms of CVD

CVD is sometimes called the “silent killer.” It is often not diagnosed until a person experiences signs or symptoms of a heart attack, heart failure, or an arrhythmia (irregular or abnormal rhythm of the heartbeat). When these happen, symptoms may include⁸:

- **Heart attack:** Chest pain or discomfort, upper back or neck pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea or vomiting, extreme fatigue, upper body discomfort, dizziness, and shortness of breath.
- **Arrhythmia:** Fluttering feelings in the chest (palpitations).
- **Heart failure:** Shortness of breath, fatigue, or swelling of the feet, ankles, legs, abdomen, or neck veins



How healthcare and community leaders can support CVD health equity

Healthcare providers play a key role in treating and managing cardiovascular disease to advance health equity for Black, Hispanic, or other minority populations disproportionately impacted by CVD. With intentional and empathetic actions, healthcare providers along with community leaders can take small steps every day to mitigate inequities and make a major difference in the healthcare experience of marginalized populations.





Empowering Lifestyle Changes: Houston Resources for Heart Health

Lifestyle changes can prevent, treat, and reverse many of the chronic conditions that are leading causes of morbidity and mortality, including cardiovascular disease (CVD).⁹

Empowering individuals in their care after a CVD diagnosis teaches them self-management skills that can improve their quality of life.

There are affordable and practical changes a person can make in their lifestyle to lower the risk of CVD, as well as useful Houston resources to help individuals adopt lifestyle changes tailored to their specific needs or goals.

- Eating a heart-healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats
- Being physically active (including a supervised exercise program)
- Managing stress and maintaining mental well-being
- Stopping smoking and reducing alcohol consumption
- Managing Type 2 diabetes and blood sugar levels and controlling blood pressure

To learn more, please visit the [CommUNITY HeartLink-Houston Resource](#), which contains more tools to help support the navigation of Houston's healthcare landscape.



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