

Prioritize Cardiac Health During American Heart Month

Atrium Health Navicent Luce Heart Institute Offers World-Class Care Close to Home

MACON, Ga., Feb. 2, 2024 – According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. All year long, Atrium Health Navicent provides excellent health care to help those with heart conditions live their best lives, but during American Heart Month, observed each February, the health system also asks the community to join in the effort to raise awareness for heart health.

The CDC estimates 695,000 people in the U.S. die of heart disease each year – approximately 1 in every 5 deaths. Deaths related to heart disease are particularly high in Georgia and the Southeast, which is why taking care of your heart through healthy habits and regular examinations is key to prevention. Here are a few things you can do today to help prevent heart disease:

- Eat foods high in fiber and low in saturated fats, trans fat and cholesterol.
- Limit sodium and sugar intake.
- Moderate alcohol intake. Men should have no more than two drinks per day, and women no more than one drink per day.
- Get plenty of physical activity to help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Adults should get 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every week.
- Quit smoking. Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease. Your doctor can suggest ways to help you quit.
- Keep up with your annual wellness visits. Your doctor will monitor your blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol and other indicators, which could prevent you from facing increased risk of heart disease and heart attack.
- Consider getting an Angioscreen to better understand your risk of heart disease.

“The heart is the engine of the body. Just like you don't keep driving your car without getting its oil changed every 3,000-5,000 miles, you need to get your heart checked out by your primary care physician and your cholesterol checked at least annually,” said Dr. Erskine James, an Atrium Health Navicent cardiologist. “Making a few simple lifestyle changes can make an incredible impact on your heart health, both today and for years into the future.”

To promote awareness and education about living heart healthy, Atrium Health Navicent has several events planned during American Heart Month, including:

Angioscreenings:

Angioscreenings cost \$50 for the general public, but are free for veterans. Call 800-627-2393 to make an appointment for any of the dates listed below.

- Feb. 7, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Atrium Health Navicent Wellness Center, 3797 Northside Drive, Macon.
- Feb. 13, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Atrium Health Navicent Peach, 1960 Ga. 247, Byron.
- Feb. 14, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Atrium Health Navicent Luce Heart Institute, 765 Hemlock St., Macon.
- Feb. 20, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Putnam General Hospital, Atrium Health Navicent Partner, 101 Lake Oconee Parkway, Eatonton. 706-923-2038.
- Feb. 21, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin, 821 N. Cobb St., Milledgeville.

Walk with a Doc:

- Feb. 3, 9 a.m., Amerson River Park, Children's Playground, 2600 Riverview Road, Macon. 478-538-4046.
- Feb. 17, 10 a.m., Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin's walking track, adjacent to the hospital at 821 N. Cobb St., Milledgeville.

Lunch N' Learn:

- Feb. 6, 12 p.m., Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin, Cafeteria, 821 N. Cobb St., Milledgeville. Dr. Mildred Opondo will speak on the topic, "How Healthy is Your Heart?" 478-776-4641.

Mammogram Marathon:

- Feb. 13, in honor of Galentine's Day, Atrium Health Navicent will offer walk-in mammograms from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. at multiple locations across central Georgia including:
 - Atrium Health Navicent Breast Care Center, 800 First St., Macon
 - Atrium Health Navicent Imaging & Laboratory, 1650 Hardeman Ave., Macon
 - Atrium Health Navicent Imaging Monroe (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. only), 120 N. Lee Street, Suite B, Forsyth
 - Atrium Health Navicent Imaging Northwest, 5925 Zebulon Rd., Macon

Call 478-633-7020 for more information.

Heart Healthy Cooking Class:

- Feb. 23, 12 p.m., Atrium Health Navicent Wellness Center, 3797 Northside Drive, Macon. Cost: Free. Please RSVP by Feb. 16 by calling 478-633-7157. Space is limited.

Heart Health Seminar:

- Feb. 22, 6 p.m., Atrium Health Navicent Wellness Center, 3797 Northside Drive, Macon. The speaker is Dr. Gary Daniel, an Atrium Health Navicent cardiologist. To register, call 478-633-7157.

For those facing heart disease, Atrium Health Navicent offers world-class health care close to home at the Atrium Health Navicent Luce Heart Institute. Atrium Health Navicent is one of only four hospital systems in the nation — and the only one in Georgia — to receive the triple crown of heart accreditations by the American College of Cardiology. These designations include Chest Pain Center with Primary PCI Accreditation, Heart Failure Accreditation and Atrial Fibrillation with EPS Accreditation.

Atrium Health Navicent was one of the first in the region to implement the use of the [Watchman device](#) for people with Atrial Fibrillation (AFib). Patients with AFib, which is an abnormal heart rhythm, are at risk for developing blood clots if not treated with blood thinners. Some patients can't tolerate blood thinners, and that's where this procedure provides life-saving benefits.

The Watchman procedure is one of several ways patients can get specialized care at the Structural Heart and Valve Clinic at Atrium Health Navicent, one of only two such clinics south of Atlanta, and the only one in our region to offer [Transaortic Valve Replacement](#) (TAVR). This non-surgical procedure allows a crimped-down valve to be inserted through a tube into the heart to replace a failing aortic valve. Once in place, the valve opens and functions like a healthy valve.

The Atrium Health Navicent Luce Heart Institute, located at Atrium Health Navicent The Medical Center, has a helipad and quick access to Interstate 75, making it easily accessible for patients and their family members. For patients recovering from heart attacks or heart surgery, Atrium Health Navicent Heart & Vascular Care's [Ventricular Assist Device](#) (VAD) program has a multidisciplinary team of surgeons, counselors, nurses, dieticians and therapists to take care of VAD patients. It's one of only two such programs south of Atlanta.

To find a doctor, visit www.NavicentHealth.org and click "Find A Doctor."

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States – created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and [Atrium Health](#). Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois, Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health serves nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs nearly 155,000 team members across 68 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations and offers one of the nation's largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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