According to the CDC, the leading cause of death in the United States is heart disease. The most common type of heart disease is coronary heart disease, which usually leads to a heart attack. Stress and poor nutrition both contribute to an increased risk of heart disease. Stress can accompany many behaviors such as smoking, overeating, and no real physical activity such a depression. When people get stressed, they tend to need a crutch or stress reliever, which can be displayed as snacking or binge eating. Those episodes of binge eating are usually the consumption of unhealthy foods filled with saturated fats and food additives. Smoking can also increase risk factors by inhaling the chemicals, and no physical activity can lead to weight gain.

  Stress also increases the cortisol levels in the body. These chemicals increase blood cholesterol, blood sugar, and even an increase of blood pressure. Diet can also contribute to heart disease in various ways. When individuals are eating a poor diet consisting in high saturated fats and trans-fat, they can contribute to atherosclerosis. Eating a diet that is high in sodium can also increase blood pressure which can contribute to heart disease.

  Keisha should begin health screening early on, rather than later in adulthood. We must remember that early screening can detect possible problems and diagnosis. These problems can be treated early on and sometimes preventable. According to peacehealth.org diseases such diabetes and heart disease screening should take place earlier and more often in life. Doctors can detect diseases before any symptoms appear, and that leads to a possible cure or at least a successfully managed disease. A doctor should also know your family history of diseases because, this increases the risk factors of getting those types of diseases. The doctor will have ideas what to watch out for.

  For so many years men were viewed as the workforce of the house, but that has changed since women share the household income responsibilities. Women were also stereotyped into believing that a female’s breasts were associated with an increase of breast cancer. Yet, women and men are at risk equally for cardiovascular disease. According to Beaumont.org, women develop cardiovascular disease in the smaller arteries which feed the heart. Sometimes the angiogram procedure misses the blocked arteries because they are looking in a different place.  Men can also get breast cancer, but it is not talked about enough today.

  When attempting to gain control over your health, prevention is key. Nothing beats living a healthy active lifestyle. Understanding that exercise is an important aspect of prevention is also important. Sitting for more than eight hours per day has been linked to a 20% higher risk of getting heart disease or dying from a heart attack. Doctors recommend walking at least 30 mins per day to decrease risk factors of heart disease. It is also important to know your numbers, and get your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar screened. Individuals can also incorporate adopting a healthy diet which includes eating more fruits and vegetables and less processed food. Do not smoke, because smoking any form of tobacco is one of the biggest risks associated with heart disease. People can also incorporate yoga and meditation so that you can lower cortisol levels which can also contribute to heart disease. Lastly, know your history and which family members have heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. I would like to share my experience with this class. My grandfather suffered from a poor diet and high blood pressure, which resulted in heart disease. He became weak and suffered with what seemed like terrible pain related to heart burn. He finally went into the emergency department and was diagnosed with a heart attack. Upon further inspection only 25% of heart was working and he needed a quadruple bypass surgery. The surgery lasted over 13 hours and came with many complications. He ended up surviving 8 months after surgery in poor health and many amputations later. His heart didn’t have enough strength to pump to his extremities. He passed away at the age of 55 years old, and never wanted to take his risk factors into consideration. He never wanted to adopt a healthy diet even after knowing he had high blood pressure and high cholesterol. So early prevention is important, and a healthy lifestyle is important. I try to always get screened and monitor my health. I live an active lifestyle as a vegetarian, and do not want to follow in those footsteps. I want to live long for my family and for myself.