

## Heart of A Warfighter: The Pulse of Our Operating Force

From the very first uniformed service members to our modern-day Warfighters, our Nation's military has been equipped with resilient, courageous and committed individuals who have fought to sustain what our country stands for. The freedoms we enjoy and believe in are possible due to the selfless hearts of every Warfighter who decides to answer the call to serve.



*Photo Illustration by Jonathan Donnelly, Warfighter Wellness – Image courtesy of U.S. Marines*

Though it takes a willing heart to serve, it also takes a healthy heart to sustain that service. Warfighters must keep their heart health in check to preserve their personal health and a readily deployable operating force, capable of fighting and winning any time and any place.

### Here are Some Tips to Keep Your Heart Beating Healthier and Longer<sup>1</sup>

- **Learn the risk factors for heart disease:** Certain risk factors increase your chance of developing heart disease. Some risk factors are out of your control - your age, family and gender. However, there are some risk factors you can control - diet, physical activity, cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar.
- **Be active:** By doing anything that makes you burn calories for as little as 30 minutes each day, you can reduce your risk of heart disease.
- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Overweight? Consider seeing a dietitian at your local medical facility or a trainer at the gym. They can help you change your lifestyle by making small changes to help you lose those sticky pounds.
- **Quit smoking:** Smoking increases the risk of heart disease by lowering your ability to be active, increasing your risk of having a stroke, decreasing HDL (good) cholesterol and increasing your risk for other heart complications.