

Love Your Heart

Given that February is recognized as a time to celebrate love, caring, and heart health, what better time to improve your own heart health or help loved ones improve theirs by quitting smoking?



Being smoke-free is important to heart health. If you smoke, cells that line your body's blood vessels react to the poisons in tobacco smoke almost immediately. Your heart rate and blood pressure go up. Your blood vessels grow narrower. Chemical changes caused by smoking also make blood more likely to clot. Clots can form and block blood flow to your heart. Make an effort during this heartfelt holiday to stop smoking and/or to encourage your loved ones to stop smoking.

Heart Health

February is American Heart Month, so take steps to reduce your risk of stroke, heart disease and high blood pressure. Heart disease affects us all, either on a personal level or through someone we love. This month, take positive steps toward the wellness of your heart. Everyday actions like moving more, maintaining a healthy weight, reducing stress and quitting smoking have a big impact on your heart! Small actions can have a hearty impact:

- ♥ Top your breakfast cereal with sliced strawberries.
- ♥ Swap white sandwich bread for whole wheat.
- ♥ Take a 10-minute walk around the building once or twice a day.
- ♥ Park farther away to take a longer stroll through the parking lot, or take the stairs instead of the elevator.



Get your heart health pumping!!

Cholesterol Screening in Children

As Americans — including even young children — continue to get heavier, their risk for heart disease is climbing too. A panel of experts now is recommending that all kids have their cholesterol checked at least once between ages 9 and 11 and again between 17 and 21. Children as young as age 2 can have high cholesterol, but not all children need to be screened for high cholesterol. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a cholesterol test only for

children between the ages of 2 and 10 who have a known family history of high cholesterol or premature coronary artery disease. The AAP also recommends testing if the child's family history for high cholesterol is unknown, but the child has risk factors for high cholesterol, such as obesity, high blood pressure or diabetes. Heart disease is rare in children, but risk factors present in childhood can increase the likelihood of developing it as an adult.

Exercise and a heart healthy diet are recommended when a blood test reveals your cholesterol is high. Small consistent changes can positively impact your health and decrease the chances for heart disease.

Check out www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for great tips to help you get started. The concept is easy to follow yet improves your overall health and chances for heart disease.

