

FEBRUARY

AMERICAN MONTH

Every February marks the annual American Heart Month in the United States. It has been celebrated in the USA every year since 1964. Put simply, this month raises awareness about heart disease and helps people learn ways that they can protect their heart health. Heart disease remains the number one killer in the U.S. In fact, midlife and younger adults are dying of heart diseases more often and record numbers of older adults are dying, too.

This year you can be involved in the **#OurHearts** campaign by choosing to participate in the weekly themes. You can follow the outline or create one of your own.

Week One: Be Physically Active

Decide how you want to be active. You can walk more. (This is more challenging in the icy winter months.) Finding a gym or even moving around more at home is beneficial. Put on some music and move around your living room. Other suggestions include: taking a gym class, using the stairs more, or exercising along with a YouTube video. Just get moving.

Week Two: Eat Healthier

Eating well is critical to good heart health. The best foods for good heart health include berries, avocados, fatty fish and fish oil, leafy green veggies, whole grains, lean meats, eggs, and legumes. Controlling portion size is also important. Cooking at home and eating out less is also a good way to become a healthier eater.

Happy Valentine Day
on the 14th

Week Three: Track Your Heart Health Stats

According the John Hopkins Medicine Health, Wellness, and Prevention, these are the things you need to know to determine your cardiac fitness.

1. How many steps you take per day
2. Your blood pressure
3. Your non-HDL cholesterol levels
4. Blood sugar levels
5. How many hours of sleep you get per night.

Week Four: Manage Stress, Sleep Better, Quit Smoking, and Drink Less Alcohol

Better sleep, less stress, drinking less alcohol (which raises your blood pressure), and quitting smoking are smart places to start.

Other suggestions: Replace dessert with fruit, park farther away from the grocery store, drink more water so you feel hungry less often.

Little decisions make a big difference.

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