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February is American Heart Month

During the month of February, Americans see the human heart as the symbol of love. February is American Heart Month, a time to show yourself the love. Learn about your risks for heart disease and stroke, and stay "heart healthy" for yourself and your loved ones.

- Eat a healthy diet. Choosing healthful meal and snack options can help you avoid heart disease and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables—adults should have at least 5 servings each day. Eating foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol and high in fiber can help prevent high cholesterol. Limiting salt or sodium in your diet also can lower your blood pressure.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese can increase your risk for heart disease. To determine whether your weight is in a healthy range, doctors often calculate a number called the body mass index (BMI). Doctors sometimes also use waist and hip measurements to measure a person's body fat.
- Exercise regularly. Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure. The Surgeon General recommends that adults should engage in moderate-intensity exercise for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.
- Monitor your blood pressure. High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so be sure to have it checked on a regular basis. You can check your blood pressure at home, at a pharmacy, or at a doctor's office..
- **Don't smoke.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quit as soon as possible. Your doctor can suggest ways to help you quit.
- Limit alcohol use. Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can increase your blood pressure. Men should stick to no more than two drinks per day, and women to no more than one.
- Have your cholesterol checked. Your health care provider should test your cholesterol levels at least once every 5 years. Talk with your doctor about this simple blood test.
- Manage your diabetes. If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels closely, and talk with your doctor about treatment options.
- Take your medicine. If you're taking medication to treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Always askquestions if you don't understand something.



It's not just a man's disease.

Heart disease and stroke kill 1 in 3 women, yet it's 80% preventable.

Help us raise awareness to end the #1 killer of women.

Go Red and help yourself and the women in your life prevent stroke and heart disease.









Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month

Did you know that in a recent national survey, 1 in 10 teens reported being hit or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend at least once in the 12 months before the survey? Additionally, during the 12 months before the survey, 1 in 10 teens reported they had been kissed, touched, or physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to at least once by someone they were dating.

Violence is related to certain risk factors. Risks of having unhealthy relationships increase for teens who:

- Believe that dating violence is acceptable
- Are depressed, anxious, or have other symptoms of trauma
- Display aggression towards peers or display other aggressive behaviors
- Use drugs or illegal substances
- Engage in early sexual activity and have multiple sexual partners
- Have a friend involved in dating violence
- Have conflicts with a partner
- Witness or experience violence in the home

You can help your kids:

- Develop skills for healthy and safe relationships
- Set expectations for how they want to be treated
- Recognize when a relationship is unhealthy
- Support friends dealing with unhealthy relationships

Watch for signs that your teen's partner may be violent.

If your teen is in a relationship with someone who uses violence, your teen may:

- Avoid friends, family, and school activities
- Make excuses for a partner's behavior
- Look uncomfortable or fearful around a partner
- Lose interest in favorite activities
- Get lower grades in school
- Have unexplained injuries, like bruises or scratches

Watch for signs that your teen may be violent.

Teens who use physical, emotional, or sexual violence to control their partners need help to stop.

- Is jealous and possessive
- Blames other people for anything that goes wrong
- Damages or ruins a partner's things
- Wants to control someone else's decisions
- Constantly texts or calls a partner
- Posts embarrassing information about a partner on websites like Facebook (including sexual information or pictures)

Take steps to make a difference:

- Be a role model treat your kids and others with respect.
- Start talking to your kids about healthy relationships early before they start dating.
- Get involved with efforts to prevent dating violence at your teen's school.
- If you are worried about your teen, call the National Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522.

It's best to start talking about healthy relationships <u>before</u> your child starts dating. Start conversations about what to look for in a romantic partner. For example, you could ask your child:

- How do you want to be treated?
- How do you want to feel about yourself when you are with that person?
- What makes a relationship healthy?
 - Both people feel respected, supported, and valued
 - Both people make decisions together
 - Both people have friends and interests outside of the relationship
 - The couple settles disagreements with open and honest communication
 - There are more good times than bad
- What makes a relationship unhealthy?
 - One person tries to change the other
 - One person makes most or all of the decisions
 - One or both people drop friends and interests outside of the relationship
 - One or both people yell, threaten, hit, or throw things during arguments
 - One person makes fun of the other's opinions or interests
 - One person keeps track of the other all the time by calling, texting, or checking in with friends
 - There are more bad times than good