



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8409
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

To: Council/Commission on Aging Publications

From: Ontell Babbitt, Health Promotion & Preparedness Intern

RE: Get Heart Healthy For The New Year

Release Date: January/February 2012

Get Heart Healthy For The New Year

Now that the stress and demands of the holiday season are behind us, it's time to look forward into the New Year and focus on making it to the next holiday season. In order to do just that, we need to ensure our hearts are in tip top shape. In 2009, 23,044 people living in Michigan died because of heart disease, making heart disease the #1 cause of death in Michigan.

For men and women beyond 50, life may now mean starting a new career, sending the kids to college, spending time with grandkids, or even retiring. Be aware that your body is changing, and those changes can affect your heart. You have the power to reduce your risk, and if you do have a heart condition, there is a lot you can do to deal with it. Take a few minutes to think about your family history; has anyone in your family had heart disease, stroke, or any other risk factors like high cholesterol, diabetes or high blood pressure? If so, then first and foremost be sure to talk to your doctor about your potential risk.

The "Go Red for Women" campaign has offered a few tips on keeping your heart healthy after 50. These tips are useful for both men and women. They suggest that you get tested and know your numbers. Those numbers would be your Total Cholesterol, LDL ("Bad Cholesterol"), HDL ("Good Cholesterol"), and your Body Mass Index (BMI). Your doctor can give you these numbers and explain what they mean. Your doctor can also offer you some tips on how to keep these numbers within acceptable limits.

Smoking and alcohol use can also increase your risk of heart disease. Smoking is the most preventable cause of death in the United States, and it can put you at risk for heart disease, stroke and several other diseases. If you smoke, stop. There are a number of options to help you quit. The Michigan Tobacco Quit line is available at 1-800-Quit-Now. They can offer you several options depending on your level of insurance coverage. Also the Central Michigan District Health

Department offers classes to help you quit as well. Drink in moderation. Drinking excess alcohol can cause weight gain because it adds calories to your diet. Alcohol also increases blood pressure, which in turn increases the risk of heart failure and stroke.

What you eat can also be the cause of heart disease. Take time to carefully plan out meals so you can get the most nutrition and fiber possible. Choose foods low in saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, sodium and added sugars. Focus on including foods that are nutrient rich like colorful veggies and fruits, fiber-rich, whole-grains, lean meats, skinless chicken and fish rich in Omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, low-fat dairy products. These foods can give your heart the nutrients it needs as well as improve your cholesterol and blood pressure. Your local Council or Commission on Aging offers nutritious meals throughout the week at various locations or as home-delivered meals. Contact your local office for more information.

Lastly, if you haven't started a moderate exercise routine, start now. Try to get at least 30 minutes a day of mild activity. You can walk, either on a treadmill or at a local shopping area, when it starts to warm up you can bike, or you can take a mild exercise class. Exercising not only keeps the blood pumping but it can also help you lose or maintain weight. The Isabella County Commission on Aging offers both low and high impact exercise classes. If you want to inquire about them, please call 989-772-0748.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the local residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon Counties. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and "LIKE" the Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook.

###