American Heart Month

In the Annual Federal Proclamation declaring February as American Heart Month, President Obama wrote “Maintaining a strong heart is key to a long and healthy life. The number one killer of American men and women, cardiovascular disease is responsible for one out of every four deaths in the United States. During American Heart Month, we renew our fight, both as a Nation and in each of our own lives, against the devastating epidemic of heart disease.” The President reminds us that anyone can develop heart disease; especially those with high blood pressure, high cholesterol and those who smoke have a higher risk. Examples of risk factors are excessive alcohol use, diabetes, obesity, poor diet and a lack of physical inactivity and increase a person’s rate for heart disease. The President suggest adopting healthy habits such as exercise, not smoking, eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables, less sodium, saturated fat, and cholesterol intake can reduce your risk.

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), research shows following a healthy eating plan such as the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet can both decrease the risk of developing high blood pressure and lower an already elevated blood pressure. The DASH eating plan recommends following a healthy eating pattern, reducing salt and sodium in your diet, maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, quit smoking and limit alcohol intake. Heavy drinking can increase a person’s risk for many heart-related problems such as increased blood pressure and triglyceride levels, while binge drinking can increase the risk for stroke.
President Obama also reminded us that Friday, Feb. 7, is National Wear Red Day. The American Heart Association (AHA) has sponsored National Wear Red Day to raise awareness in the fight against heart disease in women. The campaign also encourages women to follow their health care providers' instructions to improve heart health and lessen the chance of heart attack. The American Heart Association recommends several ways to Go Red this month. Going Red means going to see your doctor for a comprehensive checkup. Your doctor plays an important part in helping you set and reach goals for heart health. Good communication between you and your doctor to know your blood pressure numbers, cholesterol levels, blood sugar levels, height, and weight and waist circumference is important. Being mindful of your eating and exercise habits in addition to learning new ways to prevent heart disease with heart healthy recipes is also essential to your heart health.

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