

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Love your heart all year 'round**

Although American Heart Month is officially observed in February, heart health awareness shouldn't be restricted to just a single month on the calendar. That's why the WVU Extension Service has developed a year-round Love Your Heart Movement. If you begin to educate yourself now, you can help make a bigger impact in your community and with the ones you love when the national campaigns are in the news in February.

Some people believe heart disease is a women's issue. It's true that it kills more women than men annually and kills more women than all forms cancer combined. However, the problem isn't isolated to women. Heart disease kills 2,200 people a day in America.

There are ways to take charge of your own heart health and minimize the controllable factors.

- Educate yourself. Not only can this refer to well-known statistics, but also expert advice from your doctor on your personal risks. Your doctor can alert you to crucial warning signs, such as high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- Eat better. Replacing trans fats, cholesterol and sodium with fruits, vegetables and whole grains can go a long way in fighting off heart disease and can contribute to overall better health.
- Exercise. Even 30 minutes a day, several days a week, can help keep heart disease in check. It doesn't necessarily have to be 30 minutes straight, either. Doing little things like parking farther away from the store or taking the steps instead of the elevator can add up over time.
- Quit smoking. Smoking cessation has been long recommended by healthcare professionals. If you need help in quitting, there are many free resources available, including the West Virginia Tobacco Quitline (877-966-8784).

WVU Extension Service's Love Your Heart Movement is adapted from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's campaign and is targeted to help West Virginians become educated and enabled to take charge of their own health.

To learn more about ways WVU Extension uses trusted research and local experts to empower citizens to improve their health, contact your local WVU Extension Service county office or visit [www.ext.wvu.edu](http://www.ext.wvu.edu).

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