

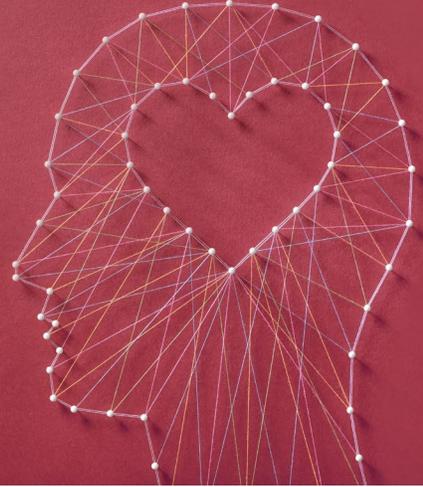
# WELL BALANCED<sup>o</sup>

- FEBRUARY 2023 -

Heart Month • Eating Disorder Awareness

## Nourishing

## THE HEAD AND THE HEART



In February, we see hearts everywhere. Storefront windows, the candy aisle, restaurant menus, etc. Not only is February a month for celebrating those we love, but it's also a time to raise awareness about heart health.

February is American Heart Month, a time to focus on cardiovascular health and raise awareness for heart disease and stroke.

### Heart Month Facts

- » Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States.<sup>(1)</sup>
- » 1 in every 3 deaths in the United States are related to heart disease.<sup>(2)</sup>
- » High blood pressure is a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Regular monitoring and support from your doctor can lower your risk.<sup>(2)</sup>

Here are some tips for focusing on your heart health this month:

1. **Know Your Lifestyle Risk Factors** - You may be at increased risk if you:
  - » Have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes
  - » Smoke
  - » Don't get enough physical activity
  - » Don't eat a healthy, balanced diet
2. **Eat Well** - According to the Harvard School of Public Health, the best diet for preventing heart disease is one rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, fish, poultry, and vegetable oils.<sup>(3)</sup> Focus on balancing your diet with real, whole foods.

3. **Move Often** - Adults should aim to get 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, like brisk walking or bicycling, every week. Children and adolescents should get 1 hour of physical activity every day.<sup>(4)</sup>
4. **Manage Stress** - There is a correlation between high blood pressure and stress.<sup>(5)</sup> Try managing stress with relaxing activities like yoga, walking meditation, traditional meditation, guided imagery, or other methods. Look for classes in your area.
5. **Practice Self-Care and Self-Love** - Reframe your thinking around heart health as a practice of self-care and self-love. Nourishing your body through healthy foods and de-stressing movements are great ways to show your body some love.

Be sure to see your doctor if you have any risks or concerns about heart health.

Not only is February a time to focus on the heart, but it's also a great time to double down on practicing self-loving body image practices. February 20-26 is National Eating Disorder Awareness Week.

Eating disorders are serious but treatable mental and physical illnesses that can affect people of all genders, ages, races, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, body shapes, and weights.<sup>(6)</sup> National surveys estimate that 20 million women and 10 million men in America will have an eating disorder at some point in their lives.<sup>(6)</sup>

Prevention is possible. Here are some tips for establishing healthy body image practices:

1. **Educate Yourself** - Learn about eating disorders and know the signs, symptoms, and where to find help.
2. **Clean Up Your Social Media Feed** - Social media is full of images perpetuating unrealistic body ideals. Unfollow any individual or brand that encourages negative body image or unhealthy body ideals and doesn't recognize that bodies come in all shapes and sizes.
3. **Stop the Negative Body Talk** - When you catch yourself or others talking negatively about their appearance, stop the negative talk, redirect the conversation, or use this opportunity to practice gratitude for your body and all it is capable of.
4. **Practice Positive Affirmations and Self-Acceptance** - It's easy to fall into a pattern of negative self-talk. The best way to combat it is with affirmation, gratitude, and self-acceptance. Try making a list of 10 things you love about your body each day, journal about the body functions you're grateful for, or affirm yourself with statements like, "I am beautiful, I am accepted, I am worthy, etc."

Adding these kinds of practices to your life can even change the way you appreciate the beauty in others. The world needs more of that.

You are beautiful, worthy, and powerful just as you are.

Contact the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) Helpline for support, resources, and treatment options for yourself or a loved one who is struggling with an eating disorder.

Online Chat: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/helplinechat>

Call or Text: (800) 931-2237



### Want more resources on heart health or eating disorder prevention?

Talk to your employer to find out what is available to you through your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or employee wellness program.



<sup>1)</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/women.htm> <sup>2)</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/american\\_heart\\_month\\_patients.htm#quizzes](https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/american_heart_month_patients.htm#quizzes) <sup>3)</sup> <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/disease-prevention/cardiovascular-disease/preventing-cvd/#:~:text=The%20best%20diet%20for%20preventing,sodium%2C%20and%20loads%20with%20trans> <sup>4)</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/prevention.htm#:~:text=Physical%20activity%20can%20help%20you,walking%20or%20bicycling%2C%20every%20week> <sup>5)</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/prevention.htm#:~:text=Physical%20activity%20can%20help%20you,walking%20or%20bicycling%2C%20every%20week> <sup>6)</sup> <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/what-are-eating-disorders>