Do You Know Your Numbers? Your Heart Depends On It.

You can make a difference. Join the Go Red for Women movement this February. Together, we can raise awareness about healthy lifestyle choices that can reduce your risk of developing heart disease and stroke. ♥ Heart disease is still the number one killer of women in the United States even though nearly 80 percent of cardiac events can be prevented. ♥ Lead by example in your community—prevention starts with taking the time to know the five numbers that could save your life: total cholesterol and HDL (good cholesterol), blood pressure, fasting blood sugar, and body mass index (BMI). Here are some tips to take charge of your heart health today:

♥ EAT A HEART-HEALTHY DIET
Stick to a diet that is low in salt, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, and sodium. Foods that help protect your heart include fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, lean meats, and fish.

♥ STAY ACTIVE
Get your heart pumping for 30 minutes or longer, five days per week. Cardiovascular exercise, such as swimming and walking, can help you control your weight and reduce your chances of developing other conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

♥ WATCH YOUR WEIGHT
Maintaining a healthy body weight lowers your risk of heart problems. Knowing your body mass index (BMI) is the best way to tell if you are in a healthy weight range for your height.

♥ MANAGE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. According to new guidelines from the American Heart Association, a blood pressure reading of less than 120/80 mm Hg is now considered normal. As a result, nearly half of Americans now have high blood pressure.

♥ CONTROL YOUR CHOLESTEROL
High cholesterol is often the result of an unhealthy lifestyle, but it can also be caused by genetic abnormalities. Get your cholesterol checked regularly and talk to your doctor about how your numbers impact your HDL (good) cholesterol as well as your overall risk.

♥ MANAGE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR
Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose (blood sugar) that our bodies use for energy. Over time, high levels of blood sugar can damage your heart, kidneys, eyes, and nerves. Exercising regularly and eating healthy foods can help keep your blood sugar in check.

♥ QUIT SMOKING
Chemicals in tobacco can damage your heart and blood vessels, leading plaque to build up and narrow the arteries, a condition called atherosclerosis. Being exposed to second-hand smoke can also affect your heart health.

♥ MANAGE STRESS
Find healthy ways to reduce anxiety, including exercising, leisure activities, or meditation. Talk to your health care provider if you have excessive feelings of sadness.

SYMPTOMS of HEART DISEASE
• Chest pressure (squeezing or fullness of chest)
• Shortness of breath
• Radiating pain to the left arm/jaw/upper back/neck

SYMPTOMS UNIQUE to WOMEN
• Extreme fatigue
• Pressure in middle of back or between shoulder blades when walking uphill
• Sleep disturbance, indigestion, anxiety, and sweating

RISK FACTORS UNIQUE to WOMEN
• Fertility drugs
• Hormonal changes with menopause
• Pregnancy complications
• Chemotherapy treatments

RISK FACTORS for MEN and WOMEN
• Family history of heart disease
• High blood pressure or cholesterol
• History of smoking
• Obesity and diabetes

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