

Healthy Hearts make a Healthy Community

By Kyle Swift

February is the month each year when heart health is commemorated. Although we should always be concerned with our cardiac care, National Heart Month does offer a good time for a reminder. With so much health information and so many sources, it's a challenge to sort through it all and decide what is most important. There are many important things you can do to enhance your health, and while I am certainly not a healthcare practitioner, here are few important points from the American Heart Association.

1. **Eat a variety of nutritious food from all the food groups.** You may be eating plenty of food, but your body may not be getting the nutrients it needs to be healthy. Nutrient-rich foods have minerals, protein, whole grains and other nutrients but are lower in calories. They may help you control your weight, cholesterol and blood pressure. Eat an overall healthy dietary pattern that emphasizes:
 - a. a variety of fruits and vegetables
 - b. whole grains
 - c. low-fat dairy products
 - d. skinless poultry and fish
 - e. nuts and legumes
 - f. non-tropical vegetable oils
2. **Get Moving.** Getting some form of physical activity every day should be a top priority for everyone from children to seniors. However, many patients experiencing health issues like obesity, arthritis and chronic pain fail to understand the importance of performing weight-bearing exercise at least three times a week. Start with walking. It's easy and it works.
3. **Don't Smoke.** Ever. Period.
4. **Be Happy.** In a recent statement by the American Heart Association on women and heart disease, studies revealed that stress and depression can influence both the onset and course of heart disease in women. Credible evidence indicates people who see themselves as content, happy, and socially and mentally active, have a significantly lower incidence of heart disease than their counterparts with high levels of anxiety or depression. Obviously, this is only one reason to strive for happiness, but it's a good one. Make time for fun with friends and family, do something nice for yourself or someone else, practice tolerance and gratitude. In addition to feeling good, you'll actually live longer!
5. **Workplace Health.** The majority spends a lot of time at work. We become friends and are oftentimes motivated by one another – a great opportunity to lean on each other as you strive for healthier lifestyles. The health and wellness of our community is a top priority for Woodland height Medical Center. We offer health screenings and wellness education programs to employers and civic groups in the Lufkin community. Contact us today if you have an interest.

You can always visit WoodlandHeights.net for more information on cardiac care, and we also have some upcoming events you might want to take advantage of. If you are interested in any of the following call **936-637-8688** for more information.

- **February 10** – Senior Circle Luncheon featuring Cardiologist Dr. Amir Mohani
- **February 18** – Diabetes Support / Education Luncheon featuring Certified Diabetes Educator Doris Weatherford, RN-MSN
- **April 28** – 12th Annual Women in Red Luncheon

At Woodland Heights Medical Center, our physicians and staff are dedicated to promoting awareness and education. We appreciate the opportunity to care for the hearts of you and your loved ones. Happy National Heart Month!

Kyle Swift is the CEO at Woodland Heights Medical Center. He can be reached at kyle.swift@woodlandheights.net.