Friday, January 27, 2023

FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH

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West Central, Fla. - The Florida Departments of Health in West Central Florida, including Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota Counties, urge everyone to be more heart healthy in 2023. Small changes in diet, exercise, and self-care can offer huge health benefits over time.

The American Heart Association offers *Life's Essential 8™: Your Checklist for Lifelong Good Health.* These are tips on health behaviors for improving and maintaining cardiovascular health, which will help lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, and other major health problems:

- **Eat Better**: Include whole foods, fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, nuts, seeds, and non-tropical cooking oils, like olive or canola oil.
- **Be More Active**: Adults should get 2 ½ hours of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week. Kids should have 60 minutes each day of play and structured activities.
- **Quit Tobacco**: Use of inhaled nicotine, whether cigarettes or vaping, is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, including about a third of all deaths from heart disease.
- **Get Healthy Sleep**: Adults need 7-9 hours per night. Children require more: 10-16 hours for ages 5 and younger, including naps; 9-12 hours for ages 6-12; and 8-10 hours for ages 13-18. Adequate sleep promotes healing, improves brain function, and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.
- **Manage Weight**: Keeping a healthy weight has many benefits. Speak with your health care professional about what this means for you and how to achieve and maintain it.
- **Control Cholesterol**: High levels of non-HDL cholesterol can lead to heart disease. Talk to your health care provider about your cholesterol numbers.
- **Manage Blood Sugar**: Most of the food we eat becomes glucose (blood sugar) that our bodies use for energy. Over time, high levels of blood sugar can damage your heart. Talk to your doctor about monitoring your blood sugar levels to better manage diabetes or pre-diabetes.
- **Manage Blood Pressure**: Keeping your blood pressure at a good level can help you stay healthier longer. Talk to your health care provider about your blood pressure and how to maintain healthy numbers.

Take advantage of Heart Month events happening in the region:

- **Hillsborough County**
  - DOH-Hillsborough will offer free health screenings from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on February 23, 2023. Screenings include blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes risk checks. Health education will be provided.
    - Location: 1105 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33602
    - Information: (863) 307-8009 or Info.HillsWeb@FLHealth.gov
- **Highlands County**
  - DOH-Highlands is hosting a Heart Month event on Friday, February 3, 2023, at our Sebring office, 7205 S. George Boulevard, from 11:00 a.m. to noon. There will be information and promotional products on heart health, and we will take a walk around the campus.
- **Pasco County**
  - DOH-Pasco will attend the Pasco County Library Community Resource Fair in South Holiday, FL. from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 25, 2023. DOH-Pasco will provide educational material on healthy heart habits.
    - Location: South Holiday Library parking lot, 4649 Mile Stretch Dr, Holiday, FL 34690

For more information on Heart Month events and other services, please call your local Florida Department of Health office:

DOH-Citrus	(352) 527-0068	DOH-Manatee	(941) 748-0747
DOH-Hardee	(863) 773-4161	DOH-Pasco	(727) 619-0300
DOH-Hernando	(352) 540-6800	DOH-Pinellas	(727) 824-6900
DOH-Highlands	(863) 386-6040	DOH-Polk	(863) 519-7900
DOH-Hillsborough	(813) 307-8000	DOH-Sarasota	(941) 861-2900

For information on heart health and Life's Essential 8™, please visit
https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

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