



THIS AMERICAN HEART MONTH: PLEDGE TO MOVE WITH HEART!

Take a stroll down the candy aisle at your local grocery store and you will see shelves chock full of big red hearts filled with chocolates. It is February, the month of love and Valentine's Day. It also is a time to consider the risks of heart disease as the country observes National Heart Month.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States and in Oklahoma. Fortunately, there are many things you can do to lower your risk of heart disease, including being more physically active, said Janice Herman, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension nutrition specialist.

"This year, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute is encouraging Americans to move more and adopted the theme Move with Heart. The Move with Heart campaign lines up perfectly with the recent release of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition," Hermann said.

Research shows regular physical activity can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke. When combined with regular physical activity, other healthful lifestyle measures such as a healthful diet and not smoking, the impact is even greater. Regular physical activity can help with weight control. Regular physical activity also can help lower the risk of other conditions that can strain your heart, such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and diabetes.

For health benefits, the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends adults strive for 150 minutes a week of moderate physical activity, 75 minutes a week of vigorous physical activity or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. In addition, adults are recommended to do strength training exercises two or more days a week.

"Only about 23 percent percent of U.S. adults meet the Physical Activity Guidelines. In the most recent America's Health Rankings, Oklahoma ranked 47th in the nation with 32 percent of adults reporting no physical activity other than their regular job in the past 30 days," she said.

An example of 150 minutes a week of moderate activity would be walking at a brisk pace, for 30 minutes, five days a week. Moderate physical activity will get your heart pumping and leave you a little breathless. You do not have to do all your daily activity at one time.

"Some people may get overwhelmed at the thought of 150 minutes of exercise, but breaking it down into smaller segments can make it seem less daunting," Hermann said. "You can break activity into smaller amounts of time throughout the day, even small

amounts of activity add up and can have lasting health benefits."

Something else to keep in mind is not to let age be a deterrent. It is never too late, or too early, to improve your heart health. Even small changes make a difference when you Move with Heart. Try to move a little more every day. You can easily do this by taking the stairs, parking farther away from your office or the grocery store. Other ways to incorporate more movement are walking, gardening, taking the dog for a walk. If you work on a computer at a desk, simply get up and take a walking break from the screen. All of these active moments count toward your total minutes of exercise.

"When starting a new exercise program, don't start with strenuous physical activity. Start slowly and build up to activities that leave you feeling a bit breathless and that get your heart beating faster," Hermann said. "Keep increasing the intensity, duration and frequency to reach the 150 minutes of recommended moderate physical activity each week. Your heart will thank you."

[pinterest.com/osufcs](https://www.pinterest.com/osufcs)



twitter.com/okstateFCS



[facebook.com/okstateFCS](https://www.facebook.com/okstateFCS)



[humansciences.okstate.edu/fcs](https://www.humansciences.okstate.edu/fcs)



[instagram.com/oklahomastatefcs](https://www.instagram.com/oklahomastatefcs)

