

# ***BETter Living ...***

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## **Go Red for Women Open House**

On Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, the Wabaunsee County Extension Service and Health Department hosted a Heart Healthy Open House. Heart Healthy snacks and educational materials were distributed. Some attendees participated in Instant Recess, a 10-minute exercise video that encourages getting up from your desk and exercising while at work. Instant Recess videos can be found on YouTube. They are created and produced by Dr. Toni Yancey.

February is Heart Health Month. Taking care of your heart is very important. Heart disease is the number one killer of women, so the American Heart Association started a campaign, Go Red for Women. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> year for the campaign to educate women about the disease.

Here are seven steps for women to become more Heart Healthy in 2013.

1. **Quit smoking.** Smoking is one of the most preventable causes of premature death. For one, it increases the risk for heart disease. In addition, when you stop smoking, you help lower your blood pressure and lower your LDL (bad) cholesterol.
2. **Avoid second-hand smoke.** For women, we know that even being around smoke increases the risk for heart disease and death. Avoid it whenever possible.
3. **Know your numbers.** You owe it to yourself to take an active role in your own health. Find out your blood pressure, cholesterol and weight and discuss those numbers with your doctor. With his or her help, you can monitor any changes and make informed decisions.
4. **Process out processed foods.** In 2013, try switching out just one process food for something you make yourself. It doesn't have to be complicated – it can be as simple as a soup. By switching over from processed foods, which are usually high in sodium, you can make a difference in your blood pressure and overall health.
5. **Get moving.** It's easy to be sedentary, particularly if you drive to work and sit at a computer all day. Small steps can make a big difference. Try parking further away from the office, choosing the stairs, taking a walk after lunch and standing up every hour at your desk to stretch. If you have a pedometer, aim for 10,000 steps a day. If not, try to get 20 to 30 minutes of moderate activity a day or 150 minutes a week.
6. **Get your friends and family on board.** Women are the caretakers. Whether we're taking care of our parents, our children, our partners or looking out for friends, we have a unique ability to influence changes in diet and exercise. You can impact a lot of people just through your own choices.
7. **Spread awareness.** It still comes as a surprise to many people when they learn that heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women. It's up to all of us to inform our circles of the risks and the actions a person can take to minimize those risks. What seems like a simple conversation could save someone's life.

For more information visit [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) or contact Wabaunsee County Extension or Health Department.