

FEBRUARY IS HEART MONTH

Tip of the Week for February 2, 2009

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among men and women nationwide, with 700,000 people dying each year from heart failure, heart attack, stroke or other cardiovascular conditions.

Cardiovascular or heart disease is the leading cause of death in Iowa. Genetic tendencies toward developing heart disease can't be controlled. However, the following recommendations have been proven to reduce risks:

- ♥ Healthy adults over 20 years of age should have their blood cholesterol checked every five years. The desirable levels are less than 200mg/dl for total cholesterol and less than 130 mg/dl for LDL cholesterol. As the values increase, so does the risk of developing heart disease.
- ♥ Consume a diet moderate in fat and rich in whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- ♥ Exercise daily. Thirty minutes of moderate physical activity such as brisk walking will help control body weight and blood cholesterol levels.
- ♥ Find ways to reduce stress. Some simple relaxation techniques include stretching exercise, meditation and breathing techniques.
- ♥ Focus on developing one habit at a time. Trying to change too much at once is a recipe for failure.

Source: Jan Temple, Nutrition Field Specialist, ISU