

Illinois Kicks Off Heart Health Month by Embracing National Wear Red Day on February 2

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CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is celebrating [National Wear Red Day](#) on February 2 and Heart Health Month throughout February by encouraging Illinoisans to get educated about cardiovascular disease and to take action to start living a heart-healthy lifestyle. IDPH is *Going Red in February* and urging all Illinoisans to take advantage of programs that focus on cardiac health, including the Department’s Illinois [WISEWOMAN](#) (Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation) Program.

National Wear Red Day was conceived in 2004 by the American Heart Association to raise awareness that cardiovascular disease was killing far too many women and yet not getting the attention it deserved. The annual observance was added at the beginning of Heart Health Month to empower women to take charge of their cardiovascular health.

“With heart disease remaining the number one killer both nationally and in Illinois, Heart Health Month is a great reminder for everyone to start living a heart-healthy lifestyle,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “The first step is to get screened to see if you have risk factors. So, schedule a check-up through your health provider or explore the services offered through your local health department or IDPH’s Illinois WISEWOMAN Program.”

“Wear Red Day spotlights the risk heart disease poses to our loved ones. Women are especially vulnerable during high-stress phases of life like pregnancy and menopause,” **said Lt. Governor Julianna Stratton**, who recorded [a video to promote Wear Red Day](#). “Let’s start American Heart Health Month off strong! Join us on February 2nd by wearing red to raise awareness about heart health.”

“Heart disease is a preventable killer, but it can’t be prevented unless you are aware of your personal risk factors,” **said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra**. “The first step in prevention is identifying what can make your heart unhealthy, such as untreated high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high levels of stress. Next, create a heart-healthy action plan. Schedule a check-up with your medical provider and take control of your heart health today.”

Director Vohra noted that small changes can make a big difference in your cardiac health. Here are some positive actions that are recommended by the American Heart Association to limit the risk of heart disease:

- Eat more heart-healthy– more fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, poultry and fish; minimize sweets, processed foods and red meat.
- Move more and sit less – 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week – including muscle strengthening twice per week.

- Monitor diet and exercise: keeping a food journal, monitor calorie intake, and use an activity tracker.
- Get healthy sleep – seven to nine hours each night. People who do not get enough sleep are at higher risk of heart disease, obesity, dementia, and depression.
- Quit tobacco.
- Ensure blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol are all within normal ranges.

The Illinois WISEWOMAN Program serves uninsured and underinsured women in 52 counties across the state. To be eligible, participants must be in an eligible county; aged 40-64; have income under 250% of the poverty level; and be enrolled in the [Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program](#) which offers free mammograms, breast exams, pelvic exams, and Pap tests to eligible women.

To enroll in IBCCP, call the Women's Health Line 888-522-1282 (800-547-0466 TTY). The Women's Health Line will be able to walk women through the eligibility requirements and the screening process.