



News Release

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Give your heart some love this Valentine's Day

Lowering your risk of heart disease is a gift you give yourself and the people you love

OLYMPIA — Heart disease and heart attack are a leading cause of death for men and women in Washington and across the nation. While gifts of chocolates and flowers are a way to show we care, the best gift we can give to someone we love is strive for longer and healthier lives.

“Far too many of us have lost people we love to heart disease,” says Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “The good news is we can make changes to improve our heart’s health. Making those changes, especially in partnership with a loved one, can protect our hearts and extend lives.”

Preventing heart disease falls into two main categories: knowing your risks, and lowering them.

You’re at [increased risk for heart disease](#) if you’re a woman over age 55 or a man over 45; your father or brother had heart disease before age 55; or your mother or sister had heart disease before age 65.

We can all [lower our risks of heart disease](#) by eating a nutritious diet and being active; maintaining a healthy weight; quitting smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke; controlling cholesterol and blood pressure and managing stress; and limiting alcohol — men, no more than two drinks a day, and women, no more than one drink a day.

Knowing the most common [signs of heart attack](#) and taking them seriously is also important:

- Pain or discomfort in the upper body, like the arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Feeling exhausted, weak, light-headed, or faint.
- Chest pain or discomfort lasting more than a few minutes; or pain that returns after it’s gone away.
- Trouble breathing — shortness of breath.

It's important to know the [other, less common signs](#) of a heart attack. If you think you or someone else may be having a heart attack call 911 immediately, use an automated external defibrillator if there is one nearby, and use the "[hands only](#)" basic CPR technique. These actions can save a life.

By eating better, being physically active, avoiding tobacco use, and managing health, people can help themselves while improving the culture of healthiness for families and communities.

Throughout Washington communities are working to make it easier to live a heart-healthy lifestyle. To learn more about what is happening in local communities, people can contact their [local public health agency](#).

The [Department of Health website](#) (doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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