

managing your heart health

This month is **American Heart Month**, which was created by the American Heart Association to help educate and bring awareness to the public so we can better manage our heart health. They believe that with the right information, education, and care heart disease can be treated, prevented, and ended. There are so many factors that go into making sure your heart is healthy. This month we're sharing a quick, easy-to-read synopsis of what heart disease is and the simple steps you can take to *#beresponsible* for your heart health.

- **What is CVD?** CVD stands for Cardiovascular Disease and is the number one cause of mortality in the nation. CVD is caused by disease to the heart and blood vessels. Examples of CVD are coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, peripheral arterial disease, and more.
- **Who is at risk?** The major risk factors are tobacco use, physical inactivity, poor diet, and inappropriate alcohol use.
- **What are the symptoms?** Many times, there are none! That's why it's so essential to take care of our hearts throughout our lives. However, the symptoms of heart attack may include the following:
 - Pain or discomfort in the center of the chest
 - Pain or discomfort in the arms, the left shoulder, elbows, jaw, or back.
 - Difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath
 - Feeling sick or vomiting
 - Feeling light-headed or faint
 - Breaking into a cold sweat and becoming pale
 - Women are more likely to experience shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, and back or jaw pain.



To learn more about heart health and prevention visit <http://www.heart.org>. Also check out our blog and Facebook for information about women's heart health and recognizing the unique symptoms of a heart attack in women. Don't forget to mark your calendar for National Wear Red Day on Feb. 5 and wear RED to show your support for saving women's lives.

So how can I take care of my heart?

- **#beresponsible.** Back 2 Normal's beresponsible campaign is all about taking personal responsibility for attaining and maintaining health and wellness. Embracing this philosophy and working with yourself in a positive, self-loving manner is the first step to achieving heart health. When you create your motivation for a healthier lifestyle from a place of empowerment and ownership of your own wellbeing you will be unstoppable.
- **Regular Check-Ups.** Doctor's visits commonly get put on the back burner and we often seek treatment only when symptoms appear; however, when it comes to your health, prevention is key and having regular check ups can save your life. Get regular blood tests and have your heart health evaluated annually. This is the first step towards being responsible for your health. It's also incredibly satisfying to watch your cholesterol levels and other markers change and know that you're doing yourself an invaluable favor.
- **Manage Stress.** The link between stress, whole body inflammation, adrenal fatigue, and heart health has been well established. Managing stress can also reduce cravings for unhealthy foods, improve your mood, and do much more for overall health. You can manage stress with aromatherapy, massage, or relaxing activities such as meditation and yoga.
- **Physical activity.** Exercise is key! Strengthening your muscles makes your entire body more efficient during movement and daily life, thus reducing stress on your heart. Strength training has also been shown to improve the way your body uses insulin and has a positive effect on cholesterol management. Cardiovascular exercise targets your heart muscle and strengthens it to make the delivery of oxygen and nutrients throughout your body more efficient. The B2N website, blog, and Facebook are full of ideas for increasing your physical activities.
- **Mind your Meals.** Eating healthy is an enormous part of heart health. Start with small steps. Reduce sugar intake, eat fewer processed carbs, limit unhealthy saturated fats, and up your veggies. Interested in lifestyle coaching to kick it up a notch? Contact Back 2 Normal for more information. Keep an eye out on our blog and Facebook for more information about eating healthy in St. Petersburg through our partnership with Healthy St. Pete.
- **Bemer me up Scotty.** Your large vessels and strong heart muscles are not the only thing to consider when evaluating heart health. Microcirculation in the microscopic vessels throughout your body is also a consideration. Bemer technology actually improves microcirculation, which is vital to maintaining and sustaining optimal function and homeostatic balance in the body. With as little as an 8-minute session you can start to experience a boost in performance capacity to achieve better health and improve vitality.



Want to do more for heart health awareness? Show us how you Go Red on social media using #GoRed. Donate to help raise funds for awareness and research <https://www.goredforwomen.org/wearredday/>

Thank you to Jocelyn Wallace for her contributions to this month's beresponsible topic. Jocelyn is the B2N Special Project Coordinator and is currently completing her doctorate degree in Physical Therapy at Nova University and will graduate in May 2016.



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