



## KEEPING HEARTS HEALTHY

# Keeping Hearts Healthy

*February is American Heart Month, an annual observance dedicated to raising awareness about heart health and cardiovascular diseases. It's also a great opportunity to remind people they have the power to take action to protect themselves against heart disease. Below are some recommendations from MEUW's "Healthy Heart Training."*

**General Recommendations:** Combining exercise, well balanced nutritious meals, stopping tobacco use, and limiting alcohol use, can lead to an improved healthier heart. For many of us this may require lifestyle changes, but it can be accomplished!

- Stop smoking - or don't even start!
- Limit alcohol use
- Exercise
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Get adequate sleep

**EXERCISE:** Always consult with your doctor before starting any exercise programs. A good exercise program can also reduce stress! Recommendations are 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week. Make sure you get your rest days!

- **Cardio**
  - Walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, cross country skiing, jumping rope, elliptical machines, Kickboxing, and many other sport related activities – 150 minutes a week!
- **Strength and Toning**
  - Weight training, resistance training, floor exercise, core exercise
- **Pilates and Yoga**
  - Exercises, stretch, focusing on body positions that emphasize precise form, to enhance strength, range of motion, and mind

## Eating:

- Do not over-eat; identify the triggers that may lead to excessive or unhealthy eating habits
- Choose a healthier alternative such as vegetables or fruit instead of a donut or candy bar
- Do not skip meals
- Try to avoid eating later than 7:00pm or going to sleep right after eating
- Smaller and more frequent meals can help you control your weight because you may be less hungry between meals and less likely to overeat at the next meal

## Other:

- Sleep – 7-9 hours of sleep are recommended for adults. Insufficient sleep can lead to a reduction in our ability to heal, fight off illnesses, and difficulty focusing and operating simple or complex tasks.
- Stress Reduction – find an activity that helps lower stress level. These activities may vary amongst individuals. For some of us it may be fishing, cooking, exercise, reading, gardening, knitting, or some other type of activity that reduces our stress level.