

PRESS RELEASE

Pendleton County Extension Office • PO Box 96 • Franklin WV 26807-0096 • 304-358-2286

Gotta Have Heart

February is American Heart Health Month and I thought it would be best if we knew a little more about the muscle that keeps us moving. Did you know that your heart beats an average of 100,000 times a day, 35 million times a year and 2.5 billion times over an average lifetime. Now, what about the blood that passes through your heart. In one day, blood travels a total of 12,000 miles or four times the distance across the United States from coast to coast. Your body has about six quarts of blood, which circulates through your body three times every minute.

The heart is the most important muscle in our bodies and it is the size of a fist. The muscle acts as a pump to circulate our blood – first to the lungs to pick up oxygen and then to the rest of the body, carrying nutrients and oxygen to the brain, organs, muscles, bones, skin, and cells. The aorta, the largest artery, is almost the width of a garden hose. The tiniest blood vessels, the capillaries, are so small that it takes ten of them to equal the thickness of a human hair.

During American Heart Health Month challenge yourself with the following tips. Eat heart-healthy snacks low in fat and rich in nutrients. Replace fats and sweets with fruits and vegetables. Get your protein from lean meats, nuts, beans and peas. Avoid fatty meats like bacon, sausage, bologna, ground beef and hot dogs. Avoid fried foods and foods high in added sugar.

Gets lots of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Moderate physical activity refers to activities equivalent in intensity to brisk walking or bicycling. Vigorous physical activity produces large increases in breathing or heart rate, such as jogging, aerobic dance or bicycling uphill. Make all your activity add up to at least 60 minutes a day. Get at least 20 minutes of continuous vigorous physical activity daily to strengthen your heart and arteries. This helps our bodies transport food and oxygen to all parts of our body.

Do not forget to wear red on Friday, February 3rd to help kick-off American Heart Health Month.

To learn about WVU Extension Service Sponsored Programs, contact Janice Heavner at the Pendleton County Office of the WVU Extension Service at 304-358-2286 or visit us online at <http://pendleton.ext.wvu.edu/>.