

**Cardiovascular disease (CVD) – which includes heart disease and stroke – affects people of all ages and population groups, including women and children.** It currently causes 17.3 million deaths every year, with 80 per cent of these occurring in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), making it the world's number one killer. A large number of these deaths, particularly in LMICs are premature and occur before the age of 70 years; taking people in their most productive working years, which can have a devastating financial and emotional impact on families.

The good news is that the majority of CVD is caused by risk factors that can be controlled, treated or modified. Your government was among 194 countries that made a commitment to reduce premature deaths from CVD by 25 per cent by the year 2025. However, governments cannot do this alone and **individuals can take steps to reduce their own and their family's risk because healthy adults lead to healthy families and communities.**

### Did you know?

- Each year, physical inactivity contributes to over three million preventable deaths.
- Unhealthy diets are linked to four of the world's top ten leading risk factors causing death: high blood pressure, high blood glucose, overweight and obesity, and high cholesterol.
- Every day, 15,000 people die from the effects of tobacco and one in every two smokers will die of tobacco-related diseases. Secondhand smoke kills more than 600,000 non-smokers every year including children.



# World Heart Day

29 September 2013

## Get involved

Celebrate World Heart Day on 29 September 2013. Activities will be organized by members and partners of the World Heart Federation across the world and may include public talks and screenings, walks and runs, concerts, sporting events and much more.

We hope that this leaflet provides some ideas to kick-start your heart-healthy activity; for further inspiration visit:

[www.worldheartday.org](http://www.worldheartday.org)

 Join us: [www.facebook.com/worldheartday](https://www.facebook.com/worldheartday)

 Follow us: [www.twitter.com/worldheartfed](https://www.twitter.com/worldheartfed)

#worldheartday



## WORLD HEART DAY

## About the World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation leads the global fight against heart disease and stroke with a focus on low- and middle-income countries via a united community of more than 200 member organizations that brings together the strength of medical societies and heart foundations from more than 100 countries. It aligns its efforts around the WHO-related target of a 25 per cent reduction in premature CVD mortality by 2025. Through our collective efforts we can help people all over the world to lead longer and better heart-healthy lives.



## Take the road to a *healthy* heart

18–64 years old

Financially supported by:

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[www.worldheartday.org](http://www.worldheartday.org)



**WORLD HEART FEDERATION**  
UNITING GLOBAL EFFORTS  
TO FIGHT HEART DISEASE  
AND STROKE

Celebrate World Heart Day: find out what steps you can take on the road to a healthy heart and a longer and better life.

**Know your risk:**

### Get your blood pressure checked regularly

High blood pressure is the number one risk factor for CVD. It is called the “silent killer” because it usually has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people do not realize they have it.

### Say NO to tobacco and avoid secondhand smoke

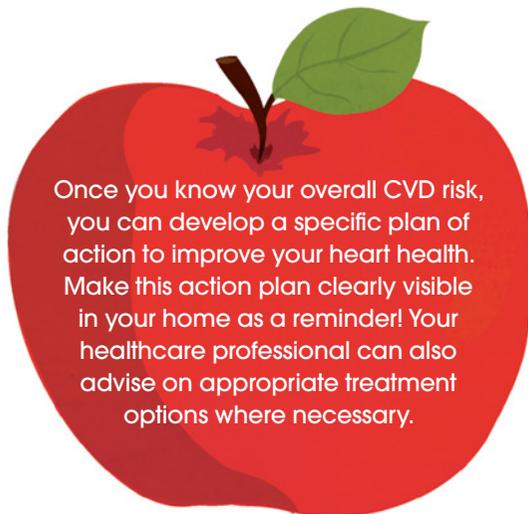
Within 2 years of quitting, the risk of coronary heart disease is substantially reduced and within 15 years the risk of CVD returns to that of a non-smoker.

Seek professional advice on how to quit, if necessary, or ask your employer if they provide smoking-cessation services.

### Have your blood glucose levels checked

High blood glucose (blood sugar) can be indicative of diabetes.

CVD accounts for 60 per cent of all deaths in people with diabetes so if left undiagnosed and untreated it can put you at increased risk of heart disease and stroke.



Once you know your overall CVD risk, you can develop a specific plan of action to improve your heart health. Make this action plan clearly visible in your home as a reminder! Your healthcare professional can also advise on appropriate treatment options where necessary.



### Be physically active

Even 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity five times a week reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Remember that physical activity isn't only sport. It is any bodily movement that uses energy. This can range from sports and exercise to other activities such as playing with the children outside, walking, doing household chores and dancing.

### Beware of what you eat

High dietary intakes of saturated fats, trans-fats and salt increase your risk of suffering from a heart attack or stroke: too much salt can lead to high blood pressure; too many fats can lead to clogged arteries.

Be wary of processed foods which often contain high levels of salt. Total salt intake should be limited to less than 5 grams per day (about one teaspoon).

### Ask the experts

If you have suffered from a heart attack or stroke, speak to your healthcare professional on the best way in which to treat and manage your risk, so that you can try and avoid a second event.

### Know your numbers

Visit a healthcare professional who can measure your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels, weight, and body mass index (BMI), and advise on your risk.

Ladies make your heart health a priority: this will benefit you and your family

- Heart disease is the number one killer of women and more than 8.6 million women die of CVD around the world each year: that's about **one death per minute**. Women must learn the truth about their risk and take action to protect themselves.
- Women with diabetes are at higher risk of dying from CVD than men so make sure you get your glucose levels measured by a healthcare professional.
- CVD risk can begin before birth, during foetal development, and increases further during childhood, with exposure to unhealthy diets, lack of exercise and smoking. Be heart-healthy during pregnancy to protect your child from risk later in life.
- High blood pressure during pregnancy – whether you develop the condition before or after conception – **requires special care**. Women who develop preeclampsia – a serious condition characterized by high blood pressure and protein in the urine after 20 weeks of pregnancy – might be at increased risk of CVD later in life, despite the fact that their blood pressure returns to normal after delivery. Make sure you speak to your healthcare professional about your risk.
- Make sure you take care of your own heart health and don't just focus on that of your family.
- Children learn by example so teach them heart-healthy behaviours from a young age by adopting them yourself.

