



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, making it the world's number one killer. Many serious diseases in adulthood have their roots in adolescence, leading to illness or premature death later in life. Children largely depend on adults for guidance on healthy behaviours so we need to ensure they adopt the right ones.

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 control of their own and their family's heart health to live longer and better lives. **Encourage healthy eating, physical activity and ban tobacco use; because healthy children lead to healthy adults.**

Healthy child, healthy adult: the facts

Nearly two-thirds of premature deaths and one-third of the total disease burden in adults are associated with conditions or behaviours that began in youth, including tobacco use, a lack of physical activity and unhealthy diets:

- The vast majority of tobacco users worldwide began when they were adolescents and if a child's parents smoke they are three times more likely to smoke themselves.
- Overweight and obese children are likely to stay obese into adulthood and more likely to develop diseases like diabetes and CVD at a younger age.
- Physical activity learned in childhood continues into adulthood, contributing to your child's decreased risk for heart disease and stroke later in life.

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

 Join us: www.facebook.com/worldheartday

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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.

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

**Help children
take the road to a healthy heart**

5-17 years old

Celebrate World Heart Day: help children take the road to a healthy heart for a longer and better life.

- **Learn what motivates them.** Looking good, feeling good and performing well. These are factors that motivate children and teenagers to eat healthily and be physically active: children who get plenty of exercise and eat a well-balanced diet are better able to perform and concentrate at school, sport and home.
- **Be a good role model.** The best way to influence your child's behaviour is through example. You don't have to be perfect all the time, but if children see you trying to eat right and getting physically active, they'll take notice of your efforts. You'll send a message that good health is important to your family.
- **Keep things positive.** Children don't like to hear what they can't do, tell them what they can do instead. Keep it fun and positive. Celebrate successes and help children and teens develop a good self-image.



According to the World Health Organization, children aged 5–17 years should do at least 60 minutes of moderate (e.g. brisk walking, dancing, housework and gardening) to vigorous (e.g. running, cycling, swimming and playing competitive sports) physical activity every day. More than 60 minutes of physical activity can provide additional health benefits.

Get active and encourage physical activity

Provide children with opportunities for increased physical activity: be active with your children and practice what you preach, this could include walking or cycling to school together.

Teens want the power to make their own decisions, **emphasize that it's not "what" they do that is important as they just need to be physically active regularly.** This includes playing football with friends, dancing or other fun activities he or she truly enjoys. It doesn't have to be sport only!

Peers can play an influential role in teens' lives, so **create opportunities for them to be active with their friends.** The social element will help to boost the fun factor and encourage enthusiasm for regular exercise.

Limit time spent watching television or playing computer video games to no more than 2 hours a day and offer more active alternatives.

Where there are not enough safe green spaces for your children to play, **lobby your governments and city planning departments** through letter-writing campaigns and petitions, to ensure cities are developed with infrastructures that support heart-healthy living.



Say no to tobacco in your home

Ban smoking from your home and avoid exposing your children to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke kills more than 600,000 non-smokers every year including children.

Be a role model for your child and try to quit smoking if you do – seek professional advice if necessary – as children are likely to follow their parent's behaviour and teenagers will criticise you if you don't follow your own advice.

Educate children on the dangers of tobacco use so that you encourage them not to smoke themselves.

Encourage a heart-healthy diet

Make family meals a special time to eat together – when everyone sits down together to eat, there's less chance of children eating the wrong foods or snacking too much.

Make healthy food exciting for children – choose colourful foods and involve them in the planning and cooking of meals and ensure there are healthy options available at home for meals and snacks.

Prepare your child's lunch at home and make sure healthy options are taken to school and encourage your child to make healthy food choices at the school canteen if possible. Lobby your children's school for good food choices.

Ensure every evening meal contains at least 2 to 3 servings of vegetables per person and avoid foods with high levels of saturated fats, trans-fats, salt and sugar.

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

