



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Montgomery goes red for women to raise awareness about women's risk of heart disease

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Lady Patsy Riley joins with the Alabama Department of Public Health, the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association and Baptist Health in celebrating Feb. 2 as Go Red For Women Day. This observance is part of the American Heart Association's national campaign to raise awareness about women and heart disease.

One in three women has some form of cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular diseases claim the lives of over 480,000 American females each year, which is about one per minute. Of the females who die each year, 53 percent die from cardiovascular disease as compared to 46 percent of men and about 35,000 more females than males die from a stroke. Yet most women do not consider themselves at risk of getting heart disease. In fact, only 13 percent of women list cardiovascular disease as their greatest health risk.

Likewise, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for Alabama women. The Center for Health Statistics of the Alabama Department of Public Health reported 6,655 Alabama females died in 2005 as a result of heart disease and 1,812 female deaths were caused by stroke (cerebrovascular disease). The death rate for cardiovascular disease is 283.7 and the death rate for stroke is 77.2 per 100,000 females.

Too few women realize that cardiovascular disease is their leading cause of death and take action to prevent it. Risk factors are high blood pressure, smoking, cholesterol, physical inactivity, overweight/obesity and diabetes. High blood pressure is a more prevalent cause of death in women than men, and physical inactivity is more common among women than men.

The Go Red For Women program began in February 2004 to raise awareness that heart disease is women's No. 1 killer. Go Red For Women encourages women to improve their heart health while taking action to fight women's heart disease. Suggested actions include the following:

Take the Go Red Heart CheckUp. The CheckUp is an online, personal heart disease risk assessment for women. When completed, women are encouraged to bring the easily completed assessment to their health care provider to develop a personal plan that matches their needs.

Visit GoRedForWomen.org for the CheckUp and tips to keep your heart healthy.

- Know your numbers. Track blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and weight and keep them in a healthy range.
- Incorporate physical activity in daily routines.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables daily.
- Find your personal way to take part in the fight against heart disease in women. Whether it is visiting a health care provider, eating a healthier diet, increasing exercise, or wearing red on National Wear Red Day women can take action to love their hearts.

Additional information is available at 1-888-MY-HEART (1-888-694-3278), by visiting GoRedForWomen.org, or at the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at www.adph.org/cvh/.

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02/02/07