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Don't let your heart do a number on you

Dr. Douglas Wysham for the Union-Bulletin Updated Feb 20, 2016

Add together 0, 5, 7, 10, 30 and 1. The answer isn't 53 — it's one healthier heart.

Twenty-eight Washingtonians die from heart disease every day. But by making lifestyle changes and knowing the numbers that count, Walla Wallans can prevent heart disease and other chronic conditions linked to this silent killer.

Cholesterol levels, blood pressure, blood sugar level and your body mass index are all important indicators of heart health, serving as a warning sign for heart disease.



In Walla Walla County, nearly one-third of adults have high blood pressure and two out of five adults have high cholesterol. One-fourth of adults are obese. One in 12 adults has diabetes.

All of these factors are linked to heart disease, and all can be prevented.

Biometric numbers like blood pressure are valuable to consider and can be improved to prevent heart disease and chronic health conditions. Daily servings of vegetables, glasses of water, minutes of exercise, or the steps you take in a day are all numbers that can improve biometric numbers and heart health.

And if you're wondering, medical experts recommend getting in 10,000 steps each day. You can use a step tracker or even your cellphone to monitor how many steps you're taking.

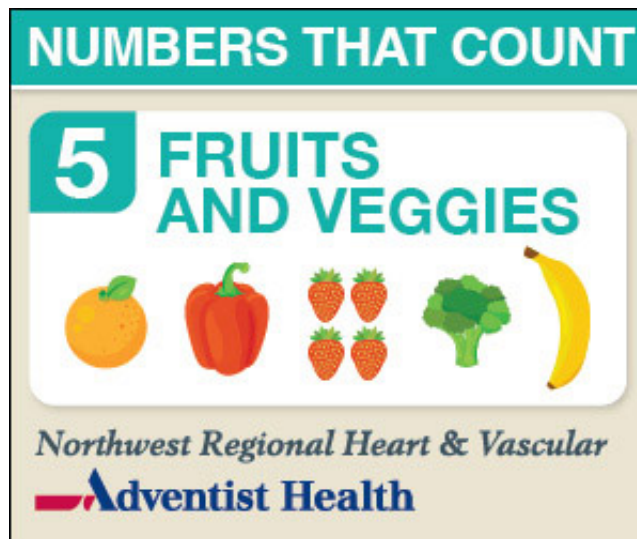
Here are the numbers that count for preventing heart disease

0 — Quit smoking. Your chance of having a heart attack drops after two days without smoking. The risk of heart disease is cut in half a year after you quit.

5 — Eat a minimum of five or more servings of fresh fruits and vegetables each day. A healthy diet high in vitamins, nutrients and minerals can help fight inflammation in the body and prevent conditions linked to heart disease, including diabetes and obesity.

7 — Sleep 7-9 hours every night so you can stay focused throughout the day. Studies show that getting enough quality sleep each night can reduce the risk for heart disease.

10 — Lose 5-10 percent of extra weight. Being overweight puts stress on your heart by making it work harder to circulate blood throughout the body. Being overweight also increases the risk of developing diabetes, which is linked to heart disease.



30 — Get at least 30 minutes of moderate daily exercise. Regular exercise can help prevent heart disease and other chronic conditions.

1 — You have one heart, so make some small changes and give it a little love this month, which is American Heart Month.

The first step is to schedule an appointment with your primary care provider to get your blood pressure, cholesterol levels and other important heart health numbers checked. Your physician or medical provider will discuss what you eat, your exercise routine and other habits to address your heart health to get an idea about what needs improving most.

Adventist Health offers a free online heart health assessment that is confidential and only takes five minutes to complete. Your personalized report will help you identify changes to improve your heart health. The test is available online at NWRegionalHeart.com

Walla Wallans have control over their hearts, so it's important to make lifestyle changes and address cardiovascular health this February.

Dr. Douglas Wysham is a board-certified interventional cardiologist at Adventist Health/Walla Walla General Hospital.