

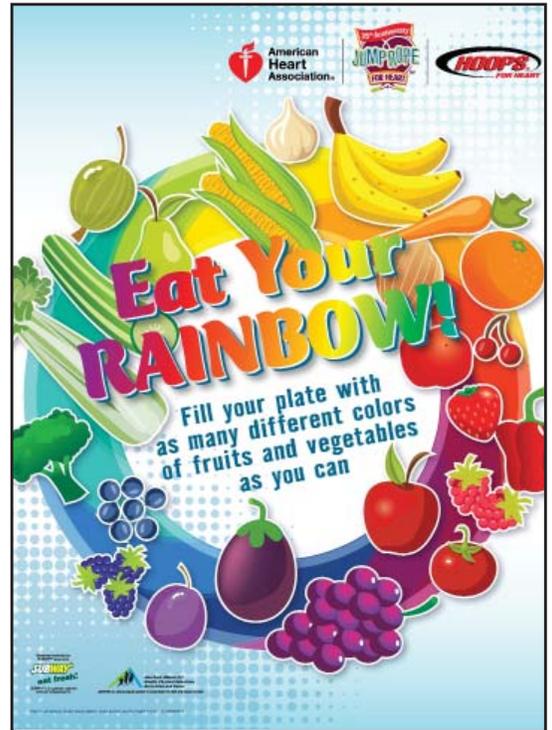
February is American Heart Month

Remember Life's Simple Seven

Your heart has a big job, making sure healthy blood gets to all parts of your body. Blood moves through the arteries in your heart first, and if the arteries get blocked, your heart can't do its job. This blockage is often associated with a build up of plaque on the inside wall of the arteries - one form of heart disease.

The sad news is that heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in America. The happy news is that it can be prevented! The American Heart Association created Life's Simple 7 so you can know how to keep your heart healthy.

- 1** Don't smoke, don't use smokeless tobacco products and don't use nicotine products. Tobacco makes a mess in your heart.
- 2** Be physically active for an hour each day! Run, swim, skate, ski, jog, or ride your bike! Sweating and heavy breathing mean your heart is doing its job!
- 3** Eat a heart-healthy diet. Beans, fish, chicken, fruits and veggies are all good for you. Limit the salty snacks. They can clog those arteries, and your heart can't do its job.



Newspaper Activities:

Look through recent editions of the newspaper and read the comics. Identify cartoon characters with heart healthy habits and those whose routines may be putting them at risk for heart disease. Share and discuss your selections as a class.

Create a newspaper advertisement promoting one of ways mentioned in Life's Simple 7 to keep your heart healthy.

- 4** Keep a healthy weight. Talk to your doctor, since this can be different for everyone.
- 5** Keep your blood pressure healthy. Blood pressure measures how your blood is moving through your arteries. Your doctor can check this.
- 6** Keep your cholesterol under control. Cholesterol is a waxy substance that blocks arteries. Your doctor will help you with this too!
- 7** Know your blood sugar. Too much sugar can lead to diabetes, a risk factor for heart disease. Who do you ask about this? Yup, your doctor!

You can find all kinds of information at heart.org. February is American Heart Month, a great time to take care of your heart. Why? Life is Why!

This feature is just one part of this newspaper's Newspaper in Education (NIE) program. A note of thanks to Katherine McCarthy, Senior Regional Director of Communications for the American Heart Association for this content.