What next?

World Heart Day is taking place on 29 September 2011. National activities organized by members and partners of the World Heart Federation may include public talks and screenings, walks and runs, concerts, sporting events and much more.

To get involved, find out more or to just tell us about your experiences of introducing heart health into the home, visit www.worldheartday.org or follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/worldheartfed and Facebook: facebook.com/worldheartday

Every year, 17.1 million lives are claimed by the global burden of cardiovascular disease (CVD), with 82 per cent of deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This excessive number of deaths is particularly saddening, since through steps such as eating a healthy diet, regular physical activity and avoiding tobacco, the majority of these deaths could be prevented.

Global leaders have recognized the urgency to prioritize the prevention and control of CVD together with the other non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which include cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, by holding the first ever United Nations High-Level Meeting on NCDs in September.

However, it is important that efforts to fight CVD do not rest only with policy makers and global leaders. Individuals throughout the world can also reduce the CVD burden, by learning about the risk factors and taking vital steps to reduce their own and their family’s risk.

As a hub for family activities, and as a focal point in everyone’s life, the household is the perfect place to start taking action to improve heart health. That is why this year, for World Heart Day, the World Heart Federation and its members are focusing their efforts on the home. By adapting a few household behaviours, people all over the world can lead longer and better lives through the prevention and control of heart disease and stroke.

About the World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation leads the global fight against heart disease and stroke via a united community of 200 member organizations that brings together the strength of cardiac societies and heart foundations from more than 100 countries. Through our collective efforts, we help people all over the world to lead longer, better, heart healthy-lives.

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CV RISK FACTORS INCLUDE:
- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- Lack of physical activity
- Being overweight
- Tobacco use
- Presence of diabetes

One World, One Home, One Heart.

29 September 2011
This year, on World Heart Day, the World Heart Federation and its members challenge you to take charge of your family’s heart health and become your home’s advocate for heart-healthy living. To help you, we’ve identified four actions you and your family can take:

1. Ban smoking from your home
   - Stop smoking tobacco in the home to improve your own and your children’s heart health
   - Implement a new rule in your home: for every cigarette someone smokes, an extra household chore is waiting!

2. Stock your home with healthy food options
   - Start the day with a piece of fruit or prepare your own lunch at home to ensure healthy options are taken to work or school
   - Make sure every evening meal contains at least two to three servings of vegetables per person

3. Be active
   - Families should limit the amount of time spent in front of the TV to less than two hours per day
   - Organize outdoor activities for the family, such as cycling or hiking trips, or simply playing in the garden
   - When possible, instead of using the car, take your bicycle or walk from home to your destination

4. Know your numbers
   - Visit a healthcare professional who can measure your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels, together with waist-to-hip ratio and body mass index (BMI)
   - 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!

By actioning the household steps above, you and your family can reduce the burden of CVD wherever you are in the world. However, not all heart events are preventable. It is therefore important to know what action to take should a heart attack or ischaemic stroke, occur in the home.

Learn the signs and symptoms of a heart attack or stroke below. If you suspect a family member of having a heart attack or stroke, seek medical help immediately.

Warning signs of heart attack include:
- Chest discomfort, including squeezing or pain in the centre of the chest between the breasts or behind the breastbone
- Discomfort and/or pain spreading to other areas of the upper body such as one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort

Other signs include: unexplained weakness or fatigue, anxiety or unusual nervousness, indigestion or gas-like pain, breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, vomiting, light-headedness and collapse.

Warning signs of a stroke include:
- Sudden weakness of the face, arm, or leg, most often on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

If experiencing any of these signs, which could come and go, call your emergency services/ambulance immediately. If there is no emergency response number, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Over 70 per cent of all cardiac and breathing emergencies occur in the home when a family member is present and available to help a victim.

Tobacco causes one-fifth of CVD worldwide. The risk of coronary heart disease is cut by half one year after quitting. 15 years after quitting, the risk is nearly the same as someone who never smoked.

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