

Patty's Points

Florida Blue 

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February is Heart Health Month. Here's an article from the Feb., 2017 issue of **Pursuit**
A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You.

Take Care of Your Heart

When we think of February, most of us think of Valentine's Day. Heart-shaped candy, notes, even chocolates. What better time to give some attention to that heart-shaped muscle that's keeping us alive? Find out how to give your heart some love with these tips.

EAT WELL

- Reducing your sodium to 2,300 mg per day can help lower your blood pressure by decreasing how much fluid your body retains.
- Eat a variety of foods rich in fiber such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables to increase your HDLs (good cholesterol).
- Limit the amount of saturated fats you eat such as fatty beef, lamb, pork, chicken with the skin, whole milk, butter, cheese and ice cream.
- Alcoholic drinks should be consumed in moderation: one drink per day for women, two for men. One drink is equal to 12 ounces of beer, one 4-ounce glass of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80 proof alcohol.

MOVE MORE

- The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise (or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity).
- Walking is also a great way to exercise. Little things can encourage you like parking away from entrances, taking the dog out, or strolling to the neighborhood store instead of driving.
- Physical activity includes anything that requires you to move and burn calories. That means throwing the football with your kids, dancing to your favorite tunes, or working around the house all count as exercise.

KEEP CALM

- Feeling stressed out lately? Talking to family and friends can help. If you need counseling, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 1-800-624-5544.
- Exercise releases endorphins, the hormone that boosts our mood.

GET SOME SLEEP

- Try to get 7-8 hours of sleep. Fewer than 6 hours a night can increase your risk of developing heart disease.
- Improve the quality of your sleep by going to bed at the same time every night, having a routine, and keeping your sleep space dark, cool and quiet.

QUIT SMOKING

- Find the free tools you need to help stop tobacco use by visiting tobaccofreeflorida.com.
- Contact CareHere about their Tobacco Cessation Program.
- Ask your doctor about Tobacco Cessation medications. The following prescribed medications are covered under your prescription plan at no cost: bupropion, bupropion extended release (generic for Zyban), Chantix, inhalers, nasal sprays and generic nicotine patches, gum and lozenges.