

Our Health Matters

Welcome to 'Our Health Matters', a new section of the Capital Health Update aimed at promoting health. Each month you will read of a new focus for your own health. Each month you may also be challenged to think about how you are doing in that area.

February is Heart Month – by Maureen McVicar, Physiotherapist Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Health in Motion Program, CDHA

Does heart health matter to you? Think about the following:

- Do you have your *blood pressure* checked regularly? Have you taken steps to lower it if it is high?
- What are your *cholesterol* numbers? Are they in a normal range? Do you help these numbers by eating healthy foods that are low in saturated and trans fats?
- Are you at a *healthy weight* or, more importantly, is your waist circumference within the recommended guidelines (less than 88cm/35 in. for females, 102cm/40in. for males)?
- Do you *smoke* or have exposure to tobacco smoke?
- Are you *physically active* in moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes, 5 days/week?
- If you have *diabetes*, do you regularly monitor your blood sugars and treat accordingly.
- Do you have healthy ways to cope with *stress*?

While heredity, sex and age do play a role in heart health, an often bigger predictor is our own behaviours. Are your behaviours promoting your heart health or putting you at risk? Is there something that you feel ready and willing to improve upon now? If so, set small goals for yourself that will get you to the larger goal. For more information about heart health and behaviour change, visit www.heartandstroke.ca.