February 7, 2020

It’s More Than Just Wearing Red

The American Heart Association’s Go Red for Women Campaign was started in 2004 as an effort to raise awareness of heart health and reduce the risks and deaths of heart disease in women. Prior to Go Red for Women, heart disease and heart attack were predominantly associated with men. Historically, men were the subjects of the research done to understand heart disease and stroke, which has been the basis for treatment guidelines and programs. This led to an oversimplified, distorted view of heart disease and risk, to the detriment of women with the disease.

Because women were largely ignored as a specific group, their awareness of their risk of this often-preventable disease suffered. Only 55 percent of women realize heart disease is their No. 1 killer and less than half know what are considered healthy levels for cardiovascular risk factors like blood pressure and cholesterol.

The Go Red For Women movement works to raise women’s awareness that they are at risk so they can take action to protect their health. This campaign is no longer just about wearing red to raise awareness. It’s more than just sharing heart health statistics. It is about all women making a commitment to take charge of their own heart health as well as the health of those they can’t bear to live without. The American Heart Association encourages women to grab a friend or family member and make commitment for heart health.

As caregivers we can promote the GO Red for Women Campaign throughout the year. Here are just a few ideas:

- Celebrate and Participate! Check out www.goredforwomen.org for events in your area to promote heart health. There are already event scheduled throughout the year. You can organize a group to walk in or attend one of the 180 planned Go Red for Women luncheons or other events. These events can be lifesaving for you or someone you care about.
- Educate! It is important to understand your risk factors, know your numbers and take action to manage your numbers. There is a flyer available on the Go Red website to post on your unit to share with patients and each other. What are the five important numbers? Total cholesterol, HDL Cholesterol, Blood Pressure, Blood Sugar and Body Mass Index.
- Learn! The GoRedforWomen.org website has tips on topics including healthy eating, weight loss, recipes, mental health and well-being, sleep, stress management, fitness and ways to advocate for policy change. Select a heart Health Champion to post a topic each month!
- Advocate! The goredforwomen.org website has advocacy opportunities that are easy to support. You don’t have to go to Capitol Hill to be part of the cure. The website gives you the tools to communicate with key legislators, connect with advocates near you and stay up to date on the heart and stroke issues that matter most to you.
- Donate/Purchase GO Red! Funds are used to support awareness research, education and community programs to benefit women. You can purchase nice educational materials and Red Dress pins off of the website for very reasonable costs.
- Go Red! A woman who Goes Red follows an exercise routine, eats healthier diet, visits her doctor for important tests and influences others by talking about heart health.