



# HEART HEALTHY TIPS

February is American Heart Month and also that time of year when “love is in the air.” The question is can you partake in this year’s Valentine’s Day activities and still remain healthy? The answer is yes! Cecily Ludka, RN, at Doctors Community Hospital’s Cardiac Rehabilitation Program has some heart-healthy suggestions to help keep you motivated and your heart strong throughout the year.

## **Have Some Chocolate**

According to healthcare experts, eating a few squares of dark chocolate a day has major health benefits. The key is to not over indulge. Eating dark chocolate may reduce the risk of heart attacks, decrease blood pressure and increase insulin sensitivity.

## **Dance Like No One is Watching**

Find a playlist of your favorite songs and dance, dance, dance. Every step counts and helps to boost your metabolism, which may help in weight loss. Additionally, the American Heart Association® suggests you take 10,000 steps a day to further improve your cardiovascular health. So dust off your pedometer or fitness tracker, get out there and dance by yourself or with others.

## **Have a Glass of Red Wine**

Toast to the heart-healthy benefits of red wine! Did you know that drinking a 5-ounce glass of red wine a day may help prevent damage to blood vessels, lowers cholesterol and prevent blood clots? If wine is not your preference, try a glass of 100 percent grape juice in a fancy glass which offers similar benefits.

## **Stay Hydrated**

The body is roughly made up of 70 percent water, and we must stay hydrated for our organs, bones, and joints to function optimally. At a minimum, aim to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily. To make it fun, start a challenge with family, friends and coworkers to see who can meet the daily goal.



## Laugh Out Loud

Great big bouts of laughter can be just what the doctor ordered. Laughter is a way of releasing and relieving stress. It may seem awkward at first, but it can be important in this age of multi-tasking and meeting deadlines. So, set aside time in your daily schedule to share jokes with one of your closest friends and laugh until the tears come streaming down your face. You will feel so much better afterwards and your heart will thank you.

## Add a Little Spice

If you plan to eat out or cook at home, consider adding spices to your vegetables, poultry, fish or beef to help improve your heart health. Some great spices for heart health are garlic, cinnamon, turmeric, ginger and cilantro. Each spice has a special benefit to help the overall health of your heart. For example, garlic lowers blood pressure and cholesterol and turmeric is known for its powerful anti-inflammatory properties.

## About Doctors Community Hospital's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

We provide personalized exercise plans, support and education to help you recover from a cardiac event and reduce your risk of future heart problems. Once your physician gives you clearance to participate, our team assesses your medical information and works with you to create a plan to help you achieve your goals. The program is individualized and is appropriate regardless of your level of fitness or reliance on assistive devices such as canes or supplemental oxygen.

Conditions treated at our Cardiac Rehabilitation Program include:

- + Open heart surgery
- + Cardiac stents
- + Heart attack within last year
- + Valve replacement
- + Stable angina
- + Heart transplant
- + Congestive heart failure

*Also, join us at our WomenHeart Support Group held at Doctors Community Hospital from at 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on March 28, May 23, September 26 and November 21.*

## About Doctors Community Hospital

Doctors Community Hospital is a premier medical and surgical hospital located in Lanham, Maryland. Dedicated to passionately caring for the health of patients and the community, the hospital has provided high-quality comprehensive health care for more than 40 years.

A nonprofit and 212-available bed facility, Doctors Community Hospital has a wide range of specialty programs and services.

- + Bariatric and Weight Loss Center
- + Cardiology Services and Outpatient Vascular Studies
- + Center for Comprehensive Breast Care
- + Center for Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine
- + Comprehensive Orthopedic Program
- + Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services
- + Diabetes Program (Greenbelt and Lanham)
- + Doctors Regional Cancer Center
- + Emergency Services
- + Imaging Services
- + Infusion Center
- + Primary Care (Bowie, District Heights, Lanham, Laurel and Riverdale)
- + Sleep Center
- + Vascular Health Program

**For more information, please visit [DCHweb.org](http://DCHweb.org) or call 301-DCH-4YOU (301-324-4968).**

## STAY CONNECTED!



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