February is American Heart Month

We know that February has long been celebrated as the month of romance. With Valentine’s Day on the horizon, we turn our thoughts to cupid and candy. We express our affection to others with bouquets of flowers and heart shaped boxes of chocolates. Stores are stuffing their shelves with candy in anticipation of our stuffing our mouths with the addicting confection. Candy sales are at their highest in the US during Halloween and Easter, and Valentine’s Day is no different.

February is also American Heart Month. I hope you didn’t think I was going to devote an entire article to cherubs, chocolate and seasonal candy sales. You’re not getting off that easy! Heart disease is a serious issue that deserves serious attention. There is nothing romantic about clogged arteries. According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 610,000 Americans die annually from heart disease. Visit the CDC website and see the facts for yourself. For those of you without access to the internet, I’ll summarize a few grim details for you here. Some of the risk factors associated with causing heart disease include high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, and excessive drinking of alcohol.

If you’ve been following my articles then you’re familiar with my consistent theme of lifestyle changes. Heart disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions. How do you find out if you are at risk? You should begin with seeing your doctor for a thorough physical. Don’t wait until you feel pain in your chest. By then, it might be too late. I guarantee that pain won’t be from cupid’s arrow.

This Valentine’s Day I encourage you to ditch the tradition of giving chocolate and give your special someone the gift of health instead. Purchase him or her a session with a fitness trainer or health coach. Take this opportunity to explore vegetarian or vegan options at your favorite restaurants.

I’m speaking from the heart when I challenge you to commit to better health this February. Fill the hearts of those you cherish with love, not artery clogging plaque. Spoil your loved ones with gifts that promote heart health. Remember that good heart health is just a heartbeat away. Oh, and don’t forget to have a Happy Valentine’s Day!

Yours in Health,
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