

# February is Heart & Stroke Month

The businesses on these pages urge you to give generously to The Heart & Stroke Foundation

## Heart disease claims one Canadian every seven seconds - fight back

Heart disease doesn't discriminate, affecting men and women regardless of their age or where they live. One Canadian dies from heart disease or stroke every seven minutes according to the Heart

& Stroke Foundation of Canada, a charity that annually spends millions of dollars researching heart disease and promoting healthier lifestyles. For most men and women, the prevalence of

heart disease is no great surprise. Though not all risk factors for heart disease can be controlled, there are ways to reduce that risk considerably.

**BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL**  
High blood pressure is the number one risk factor for stroke and a major risk for heart disease. Having your blood pressure taken is a routine on most doctor visits, but many people are unaware what the number actually measures. The top number measures the pressure when the heart contracts and pushes blood out, while the bot-

tom number is the lowest pressure when the heart relaxes and beats. Blood pressure that is consistently above 140/90 is considered high. A normal blood pressure is one between 120/80 and 129/84. Have your blood pressure checked regularly and reduce the amount of sodium in your diet, replacing high-sodium snacks with healthier fare and monitoring sodium intake during the day. The Heart & Stroke Foundation recommends eating less than 2,300-mg of sodium per day, and that includes salt added when

making meals or eating at the table.

**LIMIT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION**

Excessive consumption of alcohol can contribute to high triglycerides, produce irregular heartbeats and eventually lead to heart failure or stroke. There is some evidence that people who drink moderately have a lower risk of heart disease than non-drinkers. But it's also important to note that people who drink moderately also have a lower risk of heart disease than people who drink excessively. One or two standard drinks per day is enough depending on gender. The Heart & Stroke Foundation suggests that women should not drink more than nine drinks a week, while men should not exceed 14 drinks in a single week.

**QUIT SMOKING**  
The decision to smoke tobacco is the decision

to invite a host of potential physical ailments, not the least of which is heart disease. Smoking contributes to the build-up of plaque in the arteries, increases the risk of blood clots, reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood and increases blood pressure. Second-hand smoke is responsible for nearly 8,000 non-smokers losing their lives each year from exposure to second-hand smoke.

**EMBRACE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

People who are physically inactive are twice as likely to be at risk for heart disease or stroke as people who are physically active. At least 30 minutes of physical activity five times a week can help lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol while helping to maintain a healthy weight.

More information on heart disease and stroke is available at [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)

## What women need to know about heart disease

Millions of women around the country live with cardiovascular disease and may not know it. The consequences of being uninformed can be fatal as heart disease is the leading cause of death among Canadian women over the age of 55.

What puts women at risk?

\* Hypertension: High blood pressure can exert extra stress on blood vessel walls and make them more likely to get clogged.

\* Cholesterol levels: Cholesterol in the blood can build up on the in-

side of blood vessels and lead to blockages that can cause a number of different problems.

\* Smoking: Women who smoke have a higher risk of heart attacks than non-smoking women. Those who smoke and take birth control pills are

at an even higher risk. \* Obesity: The chance for heart disease increases with a woman's weight.

Recognizing the risk factors for heart disease is just the beginning when it comes to prevention. Once those risk factors are known, it's up to women

to take steps to live a healthier lifestyle.

Although heart disease is the foremost killer of women in North America, it can largely be prevented and risk factors managed

with adequate health care. Women living with any of the aforementioned risk factors should make an appointment with their doctor to determine a course of action.


**The Hon. Michael Chong, P.C. M.P.**  
Wellington-Halton Hills



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## Give generously in Heart Month

Why we fundraise:  
• Every day, heart disease and stroke lead to nearly 1,000 hospital visits.

• Heart disease and stroke rob Canadians of nearly 250,000 potential years of life.

• Heart disease and stroke kills more women than men, a fact that many women may not realize.

• Today, less than 10 per cent of children meet recommended physical activity guidelines and

less than half eat the recommended fruit and vegetables for optimum health.

In 2011, the Foundation spent over \$54-million on research into heart defects, improving stroke outcomes, and much more. Another \$47-million was spent on health promotion programs such as grants that support kids health, free CPR training events and community health workshops.



**HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION**

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[www.heartandstroke.on.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca)

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