

Americans Risk Heart Health

Survey Shows Surprising Gap Between Knowledge And Action

(NAPSA)—Knowledge doesn't equal action when it comes to American health habits. A recent survey reveals nearly all Americans (99 percent) know that consuming healthy foods and beverages, as well as exercising, are important steps to take for optimal heart health. But surprisingly, a large portion don't act on this knowledge—only half make an effort to include healthy foods and beverages in their daily diet. It's no surprise, then, that approximately 13 million Americans suffer from some form of heart disease.

Results of the national survey, conducted by KRC Research on behalf of the Florida Department of Citrus, reveal that nine out of 10 people believe they know the importance of nutrition in maintaining heart health. However, a sizable majority seem unaware of many specifics. For instance, nearly three in five people are unaware that increasing folate and magnesium intake may help reduce the risk for heart disease. In addition, more than half of Americans are not familiar with antioxidants, which help fight the cell and tissue damage that could lead to heart disease.

While people claim to understand that daily activities such as reducing stress, getting a good night's sleep, and exercising are important to heart health, they are not acting on that knowledge. Of those surveyed, only one out of three takes the appropriate daily steps to reduce stress; only half get a good night's sleep each night; and only one out of four exercise daily. All of these are simple but effective daily activities for cardiovascular health.

"Improving heart health does not need to be a complicated or



Foods and beverages high in potassium, such as orange juice, aid in controlling blood pressure.

labor-intensive process," states Michael Roizen, M.D., author of the RealAge® book series and the new book, "YOU, The Owner's Manual." "Dedicating just a few minutes each day to heart health rituals could help save your life."

The survey also revealed that nearly 90 percent of people say they would be likely to incorporate small, simple steps to improve heart health if they knew what those steps were. Dr. Roizen has outlined five daily "HeartRites" in an effort to aid people in reaching their heart-health goals. "Incorporating these five rituals into a daily routine is a step toward improved heart health each day," explains Dr. Roizen.

Healthy HeartRites

1. Breathe

Finding small ways to reduce stress each day may help improve the health of the heart. Dr. Roizen advises, "Powerful negative emotions are bad for your heart—these emotions can cause high blood pressure." Deep breathing exercises, daydreaming about an upcoming vacation, stretching for five minutes each morning or tak-

ing time to have lunch with a friend can reduce stress levels and may help improve heart health.

2. Move

Taking the stairs, parking at the back of the parking lot and walking the dog are just some of the many small activities that can be added to an existing daily routine to improve cardiovascular health. Dr. Roizen states, "Any amount of physical activity lowers ...blood pressure—even walking just a few minutes a day."

3. Drink Orange Juice

Low blood pressure is the most important way to prevent heart disease. Foods and beverages high in potassium aid in controlling blood pressure. On average, Americans suffer from an 800-milligram potassium deficiency. Dr. Roizen suggests including two glasses (16 ounces) of 100 percent orange juice each day to offset this deficit.

4. Floss

Recent studies show a correlation between gum disease and heart disease. People showing the presence of the bacteria that cause gum disease also show thickening of the carotid arteries. Flossing every day will help prevent gum disease and, in turn, may lower the risk of heart disease.

5. Sleep

Getting enough sleep is important to a healthy heart. Studies show that sleep deprivation or too much sleep can increase your risk of heart disease by more than 35 percent. Ensuring six and a half to eight hours of sleep as part of a daily routine may help make a heart significantly healthier.

To learn more about heart health and Dr. Roizen's daily "HeartRites," visit the Web site www.FloridaJuice.com/HeartHealth.