

# ♥ HEART HEALTH

## Get Smart About Protecting Your Heart

(NAPSA)—More women are learning about heart disease—the No. 1 killer of women in the U.S.—and learning how to reduce their risk.

“When women realize that cardiovascular disease kills an estimated 461,000 women each year and that the average number of years lost to heart attack is 15, they sit up and take notice,” said Dr. Annabelle Volgman, a cardiologist at Rush-Presbyterian Medical Center.

Volgman recommends signing the Love Your Heart Pledge as a great motivational step in reducing your risk.

The pledge was launched by Kellogg’s Smart Start Healthy Heart cereal, which contains ingredients that may help lower both cholesterol and blood pressure. It is hoped that 1 million women will sign it and promise to do what’s necessary to promote a healthy heart. The company will donate a dime (up to \$100,000) to the American Heart Association’s Go Red For Women movement for every woman who goes online at [www.smartstart.com](http://www.smartstart.com) and completes the pledge in 2007.

To lower the risk of heart disease, women should:

- **Aim for a healthy weight.** Too much fat, especially in your waist area, means you’re at a higher risk for health problems, including heart disease. A high-risk waistline is 35 inches or more for women and 40 inches for men.

- **Work at lowering your cholesterol.** Too much cholesterol can clog arteries, causing heart disease and even heart attack. Daily aerobic activity and eating healthy may help lower



**By taking a few simple steps, women can reduce their risk for heart disease and heart attack.**

your cholesterol. Begin your day with a heart-healthy breakfast such as Smart Start Healthy Heart cereal, which contains oat bran and potassium and is low in sodium.

- **Watch your blood pressure.** If you take birth control pills, are pregnant or overweight, or if you have entered menopause, ask your doctor how often your blood pressure should be checked. Daily aerobic physical activity and eating healthy may help lower your blood pressure.

- **Stop smoking.** Smokers are two to four times more likely to develop coronary heart disease than nonsmokers.

- **Forget fads when trying to lose weight.** A sensible weight plan includes developing—and maintaining—a healthy diet and an active lifestyle.

For more information about the pledge, visit [www.smartstart.com](http://www.smartstart.com).

For more information about heart disease and what women can do to reduce their risk, visit [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org).