SOUTH HEARTLAND DISTRICT **HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

*Improving Health in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties*

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## Health Department: Check up on your heart health

The South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) is promoting heart health during the month of February to raise awareness about heart disease and educate about the facts that heart disease is the leading cause of death and it is largely preventable.

Michele Bever, PhD, MPH and executive director for SHDHD, said the health department is encouraging people to ask themselves this question during American Heart Month: Am I doing everything I can to make my heart a 'healthy heart'?

Heart disease, also called cardiovascular disease, is a term used to define several types of diseases that affect the heart and blood vessels.  These include coronary artery disease (a disease in which a waxy substance called plaque builds up inside the arteries of the heart), stroke, hypertensive heart disease (a result of high blood pressure causing thickening of the heart muscle), irregularity in heart rate called arrhythmia and heart attack.

"Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and in the South Heartland District" says Jean Korth, SHDHD's program assistant for chronic disease prevention.

The health department recommends working these heart healthy habits into your lifestyle to lower your risk for heart disease:
- Eat a heart healthy diet
- Be physically active
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Quit smoking and avoid  secondhand smoke
- Minimize stress and anxiety
- Control Blood Pressure and Cholesterol

According to Jan Williams, RN, BSN, manager of cardiac and pulmonary rehab at Mary Lanning Healthcare "for people who have been diagnosed with heart disease, cardiac rehab helps prevent further progression of the disease and reduce risk factors."  Cardiac rehab consists of both exercise and education components.

"With one in every four deaths in the United States a result of heart disease, South Heartland is encouraging everyone to check up on their heart health during American Heart Month," said Korth.

For more information on this topic and a variety of other health-related issues, you can contact South Heartland District Health Department by visiting www.southheartlandhealth.org or calling toll free at 1-877-238-7595.

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