February is American Hearth Month. According to the [American Heart Association](#), American Heart Month is a federally designated event that encourages Americans to focus on their heart health and get their families, friends and communities involved.

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States.
- One person dies every 36 seconds in the United States from cardiovascular disease.
- About 659,000 people in the United States die from heart disease each year— that's 1 in every 4 deaths.

Know Your Numbers

You can help avoid future heart problems by knowing your numbers and making healthy changes today. The same habits that help keep your heart strong also reduce your risk for other conditions — making you healthier and feeling better!

Reduce Your Cholesterol

Lower cholesterol reduces your heart attack and stroke. You can reduce your LDL (low-density lipoproteins) or "bad cholesterol" by eating more fruits and vegetables, moving more often, and taking your medications as prescribed. Increase your HDL (high-density lipoproteins) or "good cholesterol" through eating healthy fats like fish, olive oil and avocado. As an added benefit, HDL helps clear out LDL, providing further reductions in heart attack risk.

Control Your Blood Pressure

There are multiple ways to control your BP (blood pressure) and keep it under 120/80. Start by measuring your BP regularly (most retail pharmacies have a machine). Next, start with one of these scientifically proven methods for reducing BP-limiting alcohol, eating more fruits and vegetables, moving more, quitting tobacco, or managing stress and taking your medications as prescribed. Low blood pressure is in your control and reach.

Reduce Your BMI

A BMI (body mass index) over 25 is considered overweight, and a BMI over 30 is considered "obese". You can reduce your BMI and your risk of heart disease by eating a hearty healthy diet and by increasing your physical activity. Speak to your primary care physician before beginning your weight loss journey, and start with one simple step, then build from there.

Show Your Support

During the first Friday of each February, the nation comes together, igniting a wave of red from coast to coast. Go Red for Women is an American Heart Association movement to increase heart health awareness and improve the lives of women globally. Since 2004, it has harnessed the energy, passion, and power of women to band together and wipe out cardiovascular disease — their leading cause of death that claims the lives of one in three. It challenges every woman to know her personal risk for heart disease and stroke and take action to reduce it. National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 4. Send a photo of you creatively wearing red at LevelUp@co.pg.md.us and you could win a special prize!

Don't forget to sign up for _Feel Like A Million_ – registration ends Monday, February 7!

Additional Resources

- American Heart Association
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
- Wellness On-Demand – Level Up's recorded virtual programming.

Seize the Year! January Events:

Thank you for participating in the webinars! Each week, Level Up raffled off **three items**:

- **One Fitbit Ionic**
- **One Sonicare Electric Toothbrush**
- **One Hamilton Beach Big Mouth Plus 2-Speed Juicer**

Weekly Winners

Here are the winners for Week 3:
- **Fitbit Ionic:** Rodney Davis ~ Dept. of Corrections
- **Sonicare Electric Toothbrush:** Neha Sethi ~ Board of Elections
- **Hamilton Beach Juicer:** Kimberly Hines-Monroe ~ Office of Human Resources Management