

# National Wear Red Day

## Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about this day?

Definitions: Annual – happening once a year; yearly

Identify – to know or recognize



## Reading

National Wear Red Day is an annual event held on the first Friday in February. It is a day when Americans nationwide take women’s health to heart by wearing red to show their support for women’s heart disease **awareness**.

More women die of heart disease than from all forms of cancers combined. Yet only 20 percent of women identify heart disease as the greatest health problem facing women today. Most fail to make the connections between its risk factors and their own risk of developing heart disease.

Stephanie, a 38 year old heart attack survivor, shares her story.

It’s only been a few weeks since I had a heart attack, and it really hasn’t sunk in. I woke up at four in the morning with really bad heartburn. I took a couple of antacid tablets, but it got worse instead of better.

It turned out that I’d had a small heart attack. I’m a little young for that, so it was a shock. When the doctor actually told me that I had had a heart attack, it didn’t sink in. “I had a heart attack, what do you mean I had a heart attack?” I just kept thinking, “I’m too young for this.”

I knew that I needed to make changes, but it’s easier said than done. Quitting smoking has been much harder than I expected. Between work, taking classes and raising four children, there really isn’t a lot of time to think about caring for myself. But, I have started paying attention to what’s going on with me, just like I do for one of my kids. I’m walking a little bit more, not smoking, and am watching what I eat.

Women need to devote time to their well-being. They need to pay attention to their bodies and to their health. Being informed about the risk factors of heart disease is important. Genetics plays a large role. Women are more likely to develop heart disease if their close blood relatives have it. Race is also a factor. Black women have a greater risk of heart disease than white women. Women who smoke, or have high blood pressure, or are overweight are also at greater risk.

So what does a Red Dress have to do with heart disease? *The Heart Truth*, a national campaign to alert women about their risk for heart disease, launched the Red Dress symbol in February 2003. The simple Red Dress works as a visual red alert to get the message heard loud and clear: “Heart Disease Doesn’t Care What You Wear – It’s the #1 Killer of Women.”

## Understanding

1. What were some of Stephanie's risk factors of heart disease? (List at least three.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What does the word **aware** mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Why do we need to build more awareness about women's heart disease? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What organization is trying to build more awareness? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. When is National Wear Red Day? \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. Why do you think it's held during that month? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What does the Red Dress symbolize? \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. How has Stephanie changed her lifestyle since her heart attack? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Write about your own health. Do you lead a heart healthy life? If yes, how do you do it?  
If no, what could you do to be more heart healthy?

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