

MEDIA RELEASE

GO RED AND FIGHT HEART DISEASE AMONGST WOMEN

September is Heart Awareness Month (HAM), an entire month dedicated to heart health! The aim of HAM is to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease and its prevention. The Heart and Stroke Foundation SA would like to remind all South African women that cardiovascular disease does not discriminate. Many women believe that they are immune to heart disease and stroke, but unfortunately this is not the case.

Worldwide cardiovascular disease (CVD) causes 8.6 million deaths among women annually. It is the largest single cause of mortality, accounting for a third of all deaths in women. In South Africa CVD remains one of the major killers as one in four women will develop some form of heart disease before the age of 60. It is with this in mind that the Heart and Stroke Foundation SA launched the **Go Red for Women** campaign. It's time for all of us to stand up and take care of our hearts.

"Most women think they are immune to heart disease," explains Shân Biesman-Simons, Director of Nutrition and Education at the HSFSA. "Women fear breast cancer more than heart disease when in reality heart disease kills six times more women than breast cancer. Even when a woman is having a heart attack she may not be aware of it as the symptoms vary from those experienced by men."

The **Go Red for Women** campaign provides women with tips and information on healthy eating, exercise and risk factor reduction, such as smoking cessation, weight maintenance, blood pressure control and blood cholesterol management. "Many of the risk factors of cardiovascular disease are preventable. It's a disease of lifestyle. Today's woman has to make time for her work and family, often leaving little time to worry about herself. We want to make women aware of the risks of heart disease now whilst they still have time to change their lives," says Biesman-Simons.

The primary message driving the **Go Red for Women** campaign is simple - heart disease kills women. The campaign uses the image of the Red Dress as an international symbol for women and heart disease. In reality it's more than just a Red Dress, it's a Red Alert! Join the Go Red for Women movement and celebrate your heart.

For further information on Go Red for Women visit www.goredforwomen.co.za

Ends

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The Heart and Stroke Foundation SA

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa is a community-based organisation established to reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke in the population of South Africa by providing education and supporting vital research. For further information visit www.heartfoundation.co.za

Heart Facts

- Heart disease is not just a disease of older women. It is the leading cause of death for women aged 35 and older.
- Heart disease kills 6 times as many women as breast cancer.

- Heart disease has killed more women than men every year since 1984...and the death rate is rising.
- 27% of women smoke. Cigarette smoking is the #1 controllable risk factor for heart disease and is contributing to women's rising death rate from cardiovascular disease.
- Women often experience milder symptoms of heart disease. About one-third of women have atypical symptoms of heart disease with no chest pain at all.
- Heart disease symptoms often go unrecognized and untreated in women. This results in more advanced vessel disease with a poorer outcome.
- Women who have heart attacks are twice as likely as men to die within the first few weeks after the event