



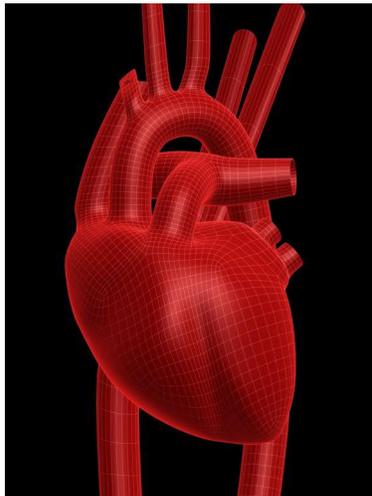
PERSPECTIVES

February/March 2014

Try these 6 heart-to-heart tips

February, traditionally recognized as “heart” month, is an especially good time to pay attention to your heart. Of course, the first thing that comes to mind is the organ that keeps the blood flowing; it’s necessary to take steps to maintain good heart health. There is another heart to consider as well — the emotional heart, a vital part of each of us.

To stay on target with the all-important biological heart, avail yourself of screening options open to you this time of year. In addition, enlist healthy habits for daily living. These include:



1. **Eat healthy.** Eat a diet containing proteins, healthy carbs and fats, and absent of empty calories. If you are not sure what is right for you, check with a dietitian or your healthcare professional.
2. **Get good cardio exercise.** If you are a seasoned exerciser, follow your established program. If you are a novice, or just returning to exercise, start slowly. Do stretches and walk. Walking is good exercise, and can be done alone or with a companion. If exercise is new to you, just be certain to approach your routine in a conservative manner and build up activity slowly.
3. **Get adequate sleep.** For good heart health, it is

important to establish and maintain a proper sleeping regimen. For best heart healthy results, you should sleep eight to ten hours daily. It is most productive if your schedule is consistent, thus sleeping about the same number of hours daily, and during approximately the same time frame. Without good sleep habits, healthy diet and exercise can be compromised.

The emotional heart needs care as well. To accomplish this, assess your psychological and spiritual needs. If these get off-track, the biological heart may take its cue from there, and jump track. To achieve a healthy emotional heart, consider the following three suggestions:



1. **Take time to think.** Use time-honored exercises of meditation to reflect on those things that can place you in a heart-healthy position.
2. **Be a friend.** Those who reach out and respond to the needs of others are more likely to be at peace with their own hearts.
3. **Heal rifts.** If you are in need of personal healing, reach out. Your emotional heart will be so much stronger if hurts are gone. If you need help, call your EAP at **402-330-0960** or **1-800-922-7379**.

Just remember, this is a good time to take care of both your biological and emotional heart. They work best when in sync.

Mary Clare Sheridan, MS, of Arbor Family Counseling Associates

Now's the time to make refreshing changes

As days grow longer, and temperatures get warmer, it is time to reflect on changes all around us. Early signs of spring — hyacinth blooming, robins nesting, and winter coats exchanged for wind-breakers — are reminders of the new season. It is a great time to review New Year's resolutions made with good intentions only a few months ago. Did they survive the winter? Do they need to be scrutinized? Are you ready to adjust your expectations and make updates? Spring, a season of fresh starts, offers time to prioritize resolutions. Focus on family, work, community and self. All are important, and may overlap. One thing is sure — re-evaluation helps you put priorities in perspective. This can make you stronger and healthier.

Family is a constant in our lives. Are you looking to spend more time with your children or parents? Do you plan to embark on special activities? Are there traditions you wish to continue? Remember, family dynamics may have changed, so look at the big picture and make adjustments according to the current needs of yourself and family members.

Work is often in high gear at this time of year. Be sure you are giving your just due at the office, but also be mindful of your commitments. It is easy to neglect yourself, family, friends and community in the midst of deadlines. However, good organization can help you keep these commitments.

Community should not be forgotten. Over the holidays, it is easy to remember needs of the less fortunate; however, these needs continue throughout the year. Check with a local community service organization to decide what you can do this spring — at shelters, your church, humane society or kids clubs, etc.

Self is often the forgotten element of change. Take time to meditate and stay healthy. To accomplish your goals, you must first take care of yourself. Enter this glorious season with a spring in your step, and take time to balance family, work, and community in your life.

Read more about setting goals and healthier living [here](#), or call your Employee Assistance Program at 402-330-0960 or 1-800-922-7379.



Mary Clare Sheridan, MS, of Arbor Family Counseling Associates

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