

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for February 8, 2021
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll continue some discussion about heart health and look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Since this month is National Heart Health Month, I been reading the latest research on heart healthy lifestyles. Some of you know my story. I care about heart health, because my mother died of a heart attack 12 years ago when she was 59 years old. I loved her dearly and have decades of memories. But there are also many memories she has not been a part of. The birth of my daughter. My brother's wedding. My brother and I each moving back to Coshocton County. The birth of my two nieces. My wedding.

Her mother died of congenital heart failure at 92, so it would be foolish for me to think that heart disease won't be a part of my future. Knowing the medical history of our parents and grandparents can be a gift. Genetics is very influential in chronic disease, but so are the collective choices we make throughout our lives. Today I want to encourage you to take small steps for heart health.

It can be tempting to watch a superhuman athlete or someone on a highly disciplined nutrition regimen and think, "I could never be like that, why even try?" But the research reveals that a heart healthy lifestyle may be easier than we think. Based on what I've been learning, I choose just one new thing to focus on at a time, until it becomes a habit. I eat more vegetables now than I used to. I exercise more regularly than I used to. Each new day is an opportunity to try my best again. My focus right now? Stop sitting as much.

It sounds way too simple, but the research is very clear on this one. Sitting around is literally killing us. Even if you exercise regularly, sitting for most of the day can essentially counteract that activity. A study published nearly ten years ago found that people who sit for more than 10 hours a day had an 18 percent higher risk of heart attack or stroke than those who sit 5 or fewer hours a day. Another study found that women who sat at least 6 hours a day had a 40 percent higher risk of death than those who sat fewer than 3 hours. A more recent study in 2018 found that people who sat for less than 30 minutes at a time had the lowest risk of early death.

The verdict is still out on whether standing desks are more beneficial than sitting in a chair. That sounds strange to me, but apparently there aren't too many studies. And I guess that makes sense, because people have only recently started to adopt this posture for long periods at work. I can remember when I left my last job the marketing department was getting a complete remodel and several trendy treadmill desks were installed. We nerdy research scientists did not have anything nearly that cool. However, we were often standing in our labs for many hours during the day.

During the past year, I've sat more than ever before. Maybe you have found this to be true for you. This time of year is the toughest for getting out to take a walk. Not only is it freezing, but sidewalks and roadways aren't always clear. I have found it encouraging to see many people walk the track, participate in Silver Sneakers or other fitness classes, or play pickleball at Kids America in the mornings. All of this activity is fantastic to see. Just be sure that you aren't spending the rest of your day on your tush.

Make it your goal this week to get up at least every hour. You can even walk laps inside your house, going up and down the stairs if you are able. Dreary winter days can make us feel like hibernating. Fight the urge to sit around and fight for your heart health this week. For more encouragement, join OSU Extension for "Steps to a Healthier Heart Webinars" in February and March. Check out our Facebook page "OSU Extension Coshocton County" for registration information.

The "East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series" continues this Thursday with QPR training, which stands for "Question, Persuade and Refer" a suicide prevention training. A total of 10 webinars and 3 field days will be held through May on a variety of financial, production, and home-related topics to help women in agriculture. Some of these upcoming topics include insurance, hands-on tractor operation skills, loans, fruit tree pruning and much more. Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!