Military Health System Communications Toolkit

Monthly Topics February 2021

Topics and Resources For Communicators

MHS Military Health System
health.mil

CALENDAR | OVERVIEW | HEALTHY HEART & TOTAL FORCE FITNESS | PREVENTING HEART DISEASE | SAFE PHYSICAL FITNESS IN WINTER WEATHER | FEBRUARY OBSERVANCES | HEALTH.MIL SPOTLIGHT | GRAPHICS

FEBRUARY 2021

American Heart Month
Black History Month
Low Vision Awareness Month
Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

National Children's Dental Health Month
Patient Appreciation Month
International Prenatal Infection Prevention Month

	1	2 Groundhog Day Give Kids a Smile Day	3 National Women Physicians Day Four Chaplains Day	4 World Cancer Day USO Birthday	5 National Wear Red Day	6
7 National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day	8	9 Toothache Day	10	11	12 Chinese New Year	13
14 Valentine's Day National Donor Day	15 Presidents' Day	16	17	18	19 National Caregiver's Day Coast Guard Reserve Birthday	20
		Heart Failure Awareness Week				
		National Salute To Veteran Patients Week				
21	22 National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day	23	24	25	26	27
		National Eating Disorders Awareness Week				
28 Rare Disease Day 2021	March 1	2	3			
National Eating Disorders Awareness Week						

Overview

Healthy Heart for Body and Soul

Every February is Heart Health Month to raise awareness of heart disease and promote healthy prevention strategies. A healthy heart is vital to overall wellness, and critical to readiness and optimizing performance. Viewing heart health through the lens of two Total Force Fitness domains, Physical Fitness and Spiritual and Ideological Fitness, the MHS is taking a holistic approach to the heart this February, to understand how the body and soul impact heart health, and vice versa.

Healthy Heart and Physical Fitness

Heart health is affected by numerous physical fitness measures, and a healthy, strong heart boosts physical performance. The heart is an enormously complex organ and of course vital to our survival. Conditions of the heart can have serious and far-reaching effects, but fortunately there are ways to promote heart health through a comprehensive approach to health and wellness, emphasizing proper nutrition, physical activity, mental wellness, tobacco-free living, and appropriate sleep habits.

Healthy Heart and Spiritual and Ideological Fitness

February has long been associated with broken hearts because of Valentine's Day, and the heart is a power symbol of emotional well-being. Spiritual health has a real impact on your heart. Broken heart syndrome (or "Takotsubo syndrome") is a recognized heart condition typically triggered by stressful situations, extreme emotions, serious illness or surgery.

Preventing Heart Disease

In most years, cardiovascular disease — including heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure — is the number one killer of men and women in the United States. Knowing the risk factors, warning signs, and symptoms of heart disease is key to avoiding serious health complications, including death, but many people don't know the signs. About half of Americans have at least one of these three risk factors.

Safe Physical Fitness in Winter Weather

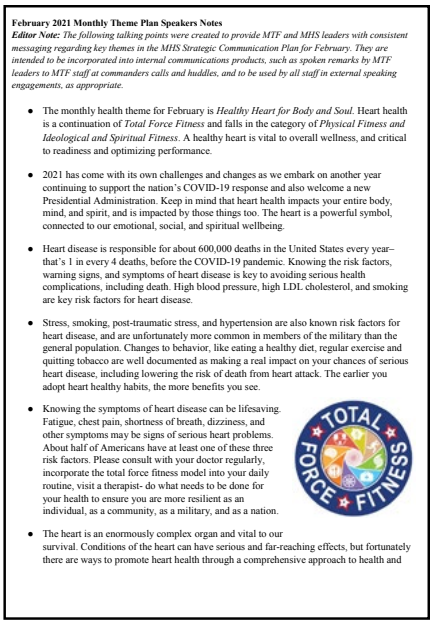
Service members stay active year round to maintain their physical fitness even during cold months. However, strenuous activity during cold weather can increase risk of heart attack compared to temperate weather. Even things like shoveling snow can strain a person's heart, potentially causing heart attacks or abnormal heartbeats.

February Observances

February has numerous national and health observances in addition to American Heart Month, notably Black History Month. Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by Black Americans and a time to recognize the immeasurable impact they have had on the history of the United States. Black Americans have a long and distinguished history in the U.S. military, defending our nation with loyalty, honor, and patriotism.

February Speaker's Notes

Please consider using some of these messages on heart health, Total Force Fitness and other February themes during internal or external speaking opportunities in February. click here [CAC required to access this link]



February 2021 Monthly Theme Plan Speakers Notes

Editor Note: *The following talking points were created to provide MTF and MHS leaders with consistent messaging regarding key themes in the MHS Strategic Communication Plan for February. They are intended to be incorporated into internal communications products, such as spoken remarks by MTF leaders to MTF staff at commanders calls and huddles, and to be used by all staff in external speaking engagements, as appropriate.*

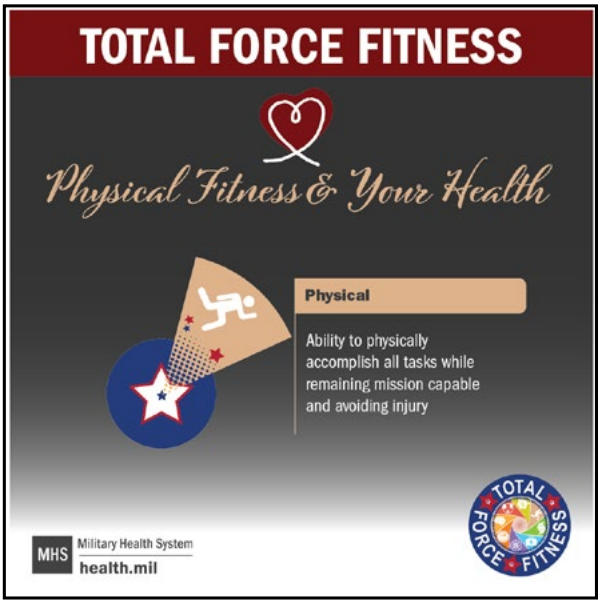
- The monthly health theme for February is *Healthy Heart for Body and Soul.* Heart health is a continuation of *Total Force Fitness* and falls in the category of *Physical Fitness and Ideological and Spiritual Fitness*. A healthy heart is vital to overall wellness, and critical to readiness and optimizing performance.
- 2021 has come with its own challenges and changes as we embark on another year continuing to support the nation's COVID-19 response and also welcome a new Presidential Administration. Keep in mind that heart health impacts your entire body, mind, and spirit, and is impacted by those things too. The heart is a powerful symbol, connected to our emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing.
- Heart disease is responsible for about 600,000 deaths in the United States every year– that's 1 in every 4 deaths, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Knowing the risk factors, warning signs, and symptoms of heart disease is key to avoiding serious health complications, including death. High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors for heart disease.
- Stress, smoking, post-traumatic stress, and hypertension are also known risk factors for heart disease, and are unfortunately more common in members of the military than the general population. Changes to behavior, like eating a healthy diet, regular exercise and quitting tobacco are well documented as making a real impact on your chances of serious heart disease, including lowering the risk of death from heart attack. The earlier you adopt heart healthy habits, the more benefits you see.
- Knowing the symptoms of heart disease can be lifesaving. Fatigue, chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, and other symptoms may be signs of serious heart problems. About half of Americans have at least one of these three risk factors. Please consult with your doctor regularly, incorporate the total force fitness model into your daily routine, visit a therapist- do what needs to be done for your health to ensure you are more resilient as an individual, as a community, as a military, and as a nation.
- The heart is an enormously complex organ and vital to our survival. Conditions of the heart can have serious and far-reaching effects, but fortunately there are ways to promote heart health through a comprehensive approach to health and

Healthy Heart and Total Force Fitness

Key Messages

Total Force Fitness is a holistic concept of health that focuses on Service Members' entire health throughout their career, connecting eight dimensions of fitness to optimize health, performance and readiness. This month, we are focusing on how Physical Fitness and Ideological and Spiritual Fitness are integrated with Heart Health for Body and Soul.

- **Physical Fitness and the Heart:** The TFF Physical Fitness Domain consists of the ability to physically accomplish all aspects of your tasks while avoiding injury. Heart health is affected by numerous physical fitness measures, and a healthy, strong heart boosts physical performance.
  - The heart is an enormously complex organ and conditions of the heart can have serious and far-reaching effects.
  - Military readiness requires training practices to maintain performance, prevent injury and illness, and support speedy recovery, all connected to heart health.
  - Fortunately, there are ways to promote heart health through a comprehensive approach to health and wellness, emphasizing proper nutrition, physical activity, mental wellness, tobacco-free living, and appropriate sleep habits.
  - A proper, balanced exercise routine is an important step towards heart health, and ensuring that your heart contributes to physical fitness.
  - Exercises that support physical fitness, readiness and heart health include:
    - Aerobic exercise
    - Flexibility and balance
    - Resistance or strength training.



- **Spiritual and Ideological Fitness and the Heath:** The TFF Spiritual and Ideological Fitness Domain consists of having beliefs and practices that strengthen your connectedness with sources of hope, meaning, and purpose. The heart is a powerful symbol of our emotional and spiritual selves, and the values that we hold dear.
  - Our emotions can also connect directly to our heart's health.
  - Being aware of, and living your life consistent with core values, beliefs, and principles, can give you the tools to help you recover from sudden stress and shock more quickly.
    - For service members, this often means commitment to service and sacrifice, and relationships with family, comrades, unit, community, the Nation, and society as a whole.
    - When your life choices, actions, and words are not aligned to your core values and beliefs, it can create added stress and self-doubt.

  - Broken heart syndrome (formally known as "Takotsubo syndrome") is a recognized heart condition typically triggered by stressful situations and extreme emotions, or a serious physical illness or surgery.
    - The most common symptom is sudden chest pain, often mistaken for a heart attack.
    - Broken heart syndrome can actually disrupt your heart's normal pumping function by affecting part of the heart, while leaving the rest functioning normally.

Additional Resources for Healthy Heart and Total Force Fitness

- Health.mil Total Force Fitness page
- Human Performance Resources by CHAMP Spiritual & Ideological Fitness Page
- Health.mil page on Health.mil page on spiritual and ideological health
- Human Performance Resources by CHAMP Physical Fitness Page
- Health.mil Physical Fitness Page

Preventing Heart Disease

Key Messages

Heart disease is responsible for about 600,000 deaths in the United States every year – that's 1 in every 4 deaths, the most common cause of death before the COVID-19 pandemic. Lowering your risk factors for heart disease is critical to your health, and will help Service Members improve their readiness and mission performance.

- Knowing the risk factors, warning signs, and symptoms of heart disease is key to avoiding serious health complications, including death, but many people don't know the signs.
  - High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors for heart disease.
  - Just under half of Americans (47%) have at least one of these three risk factors.
  - Warning signs of heart disease include fatigue, chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, among other symptoms.
- There are strong indications that heart disease is more common in service members and veterans.
  - Stress, smoking, post-traumatic stress, and hypertension are known risk factors for heart disease, and are more common in members of the military than the general population.
- The four most common symptoms of heart attacks are chest pain or discomfort; upper body pain or discomfort in the arms, back, neck, jaw, or upper stomach; shortness of breath; nausea, lightheadedness, or cold sweats.
- There are well understood ways of minimizing the risk and impacts of heart disease.
  - Eat a balanced, healthy diet, low in sodium, cholesterol, and saturated fat (the Mediterranean diet is considered an excellent model)
  - Get at least 2.5 hours a week of physical activity
  - Get seven to eight hours of sleep
  - Manage stress
  - Don't use tobacco and keep alcohol consumption low.

Additional Resources for Preventing Heart Disease

- Health.mil Heart Health Page
- Human Performance Resources by CHAMP page on Reducing Heart Disease Risk
- Human Performance Resources by CHAMP page on Holistic Heart Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention page on Heart Disease
- Health.mil page on Tobacco-Free Living

Safe Physical Fitness in Winter Weather

Key Messages

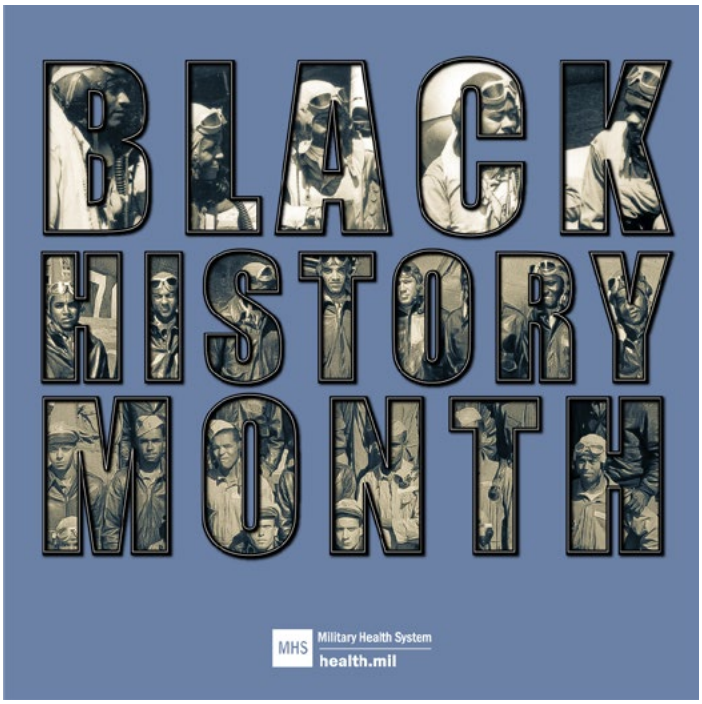
Staying mission ready means avoiding preventable injury and illness. Winter weather poses a risk to health, including to your heart, which can be minimized with proper winter safety actions.

- Strenuous activity during cold weather can increase your risk of heart attack compared to temperate weather.
  - Cold weather can cause blood vessels and arteries to constrict, making the heart work harder to pump blood.
  - This can cause angina, or chest pain, that can also spread to the shoulders, arms, or neck.
  - Strenuous activity out in the cold should be approached with caution, especially if you are not used to physical activity – this even includes things like shoveling snow, yard work, or exercise.
- Make good choices about the rigor of your cold weather exercises and the clothing you wear, and take extra care with regular tasks made more dangerous by ice and snow.
- Listen to your body: chest pain, lightheadedness, shortness of breath and dizziness mean that all activity should stop immediately and medical attention is necessary.
- Exercising in cold weather also poses other different risks than warm or temperate weather.
  - Cold muscles can lead to injuries. Make sure you stretch before exercising in the cold weather.
  - Your endurance can change in cold weather. Make sure you know your winter limits before you push them.
  - Hypothermia or frostbite are real concerns in extreme cold. Wear appropriate gear, or carry gloves, hats, extra socks, or an additional layer.
    - ▶ Limit time outside in windy, wet, or extremely cold weather.
    - ▶ Your core may be warm, but your fingers and toes can be at risk from frostbite.
    - ▶ If exertion is keeping your body temperature up, it can drop rapidly once you stop exercising

Additional Resources for Preventing Heart Disease

- Health.mil page on Winter Safety
- Ask the Doc
- Additional Health.mil Winter Safety graphics
- How to prevent cold weather injuries
- CDC extreme cold guide
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) page on Working in Cold Weather

February Observances



Black History Month, also known as African American History Month, celebrated in February, recognizes the accomplishments of Black Americans, and their enormous contributions to our nation. Black Americans have a long distinguished history of serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, defending their Nation with loyalty, honor and patriotism in every war since the American Revolution.

- Through American history, generations of Black Americans have struggled with adversity to achieve the full benefits of citizenship in American society.
- The U.S. military has played a significant role in the civil rights movement in America, notably in the integration of the Armed Forces following World War II in 1948.
- Black Americans' contributions to military medicine are many and ongoing.
- Black Americans have an increased risk of heart disease.
  - They are at least 40% more likely to experience some form of cardiovascular disease and are 20% more likely to die from heart disease than non-Hispanic white Americans.
  - Hypertension is the most common cause of further heart disease amongst African Americans, which is often affected by lifestyle factors like diet and exercise.
  - Diabetes, frequently connected to heart disease, also occurs with higher frequency amongst African Americans.

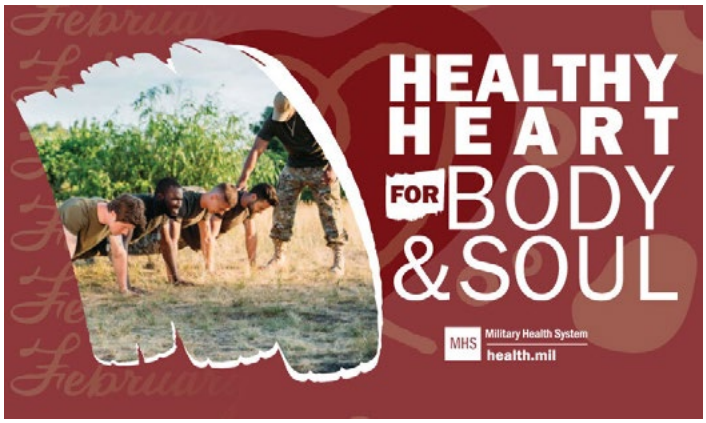
Additional Resources for Black History Month

- Library of Congress site on African American History Month

HEALTH.MIL SPOTLIGHT PAGE

Visit the Total Force Fitness Health.mil page to learn more about TFF and see February theme articles throughout the month.

Heart Health



Winter Safety

Black History Month

APPROVED GRAPHICS

Graphics to Use on Your Platforms

Use these graphics on your social media platforms in support of February themes and observances.

These graphics are in the February Toolkit on Health.mil.

Healthy Heart Body and Soul

Suggested Social Media Message: February is *#HeartHealthMonth!* A time to raise awareness of heart disease and promote healthy prevention strategies for your mind, body, and spirit. Let's kick-off the month with some heart-healthy habits!

#TotalForceFitness *#HeartBodySoul*

https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Operation-Live-Well/Preventive-Health/Heart-Health

Healthy Heart Body and Soul

Suggested Social Media Message: Your heart is critical to your overall wellness, and connects to every aspects of fitness, physically, cognitively and spiritually. Treating your heart well through exercise, diet, sleep and avoiding tobacco will pay benefits throughout your entire body and soul.

#TotalForceFitness *#HeartBodySoul*

https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Conditions-and-Treatments/Mental-Health

Healthy Heart Body and Soul

Suggested Social Media Message: Do you know how to keep your heart healthy? You can take an active role in reducing your risk for heart disease by eating a healthy diet, engaging in physical activity, and managing your cholesterol and blood pressure.

#TotalForceFitness #HeartBodySoul

https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/

Physical Fitness and your heart

Suggested Social Media Message: February is known to be the month of heartbreak due to Valentine's Day. However, it is important to remember that even heartbreak can affect your health due to unhealthy habits, stress, lack of exercise, and alcohol consumption.

#LoveYourHeart #TotalForceFitness #HeartBodySoul

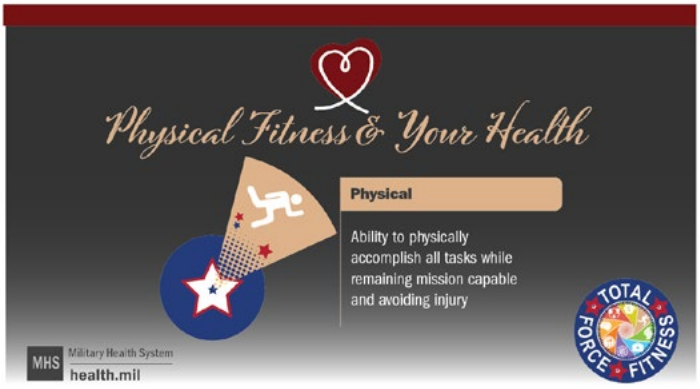
https://www.hprc-online.org/search-gse?val=ideological

Physical Fitness and your heart

Suggested Social Media Message: Physical activity strengthens your heart and improves lung function. When done regularly, moderate or vigorous aerobic activity can lower your risk for coronary heart disease. Together, let's get fit:

#TotalForceFitness #HeartBodySoul

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/physical-activity-and-your-heart



Heart Disease Prevention

Suggested Social Media Message: Preventing heart disease is straightforward, but it can be a lifelong process. Controlling your weight, exercising, avoiding tobacco and eating a healthy diet are the keys to preventing heart disease.

#LoveYourHeart #TotalForceFitness #HeartBodySoul

https://www.hprc-online.org/physical-fitness/injury-prevention/reduce-your-risk-heart-disease

Black History Month

Suggested Social Media Message: February is Black History Month -- a time to recognize and honor the significant roles African Americans have played in shaping U.S. history. Celebrate Black History Month by learning more about how it came to be:

https://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/about/

Groundhog Day (Feb 2)

Suggested Social Media Message: See your shadow today? Don't let more winter get you down.

#GroundhogDay

Patient Appreciation Week (Feb 14-20)

Suggested Social Media Message: Same text for all three: During National Patient Appreciation Week, we give our thanks to every service ember, retiree, family member and every other patient in the MHS. You are why we do what we do.

#PatientsFirst

Navy

Army

Air Force

National Children's Dental Health Month

Suggested Social Media Message: This year during National Children's Dental Health Month, you can bring a smile to your child's face – Get them started on a lifetime of healthy teeth with good dental habits, limiting sugary foods and drinks, and keeping up with regular dental appointments.

https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/childrens-oral-health/index.html

Presidents Day (Feb 15)

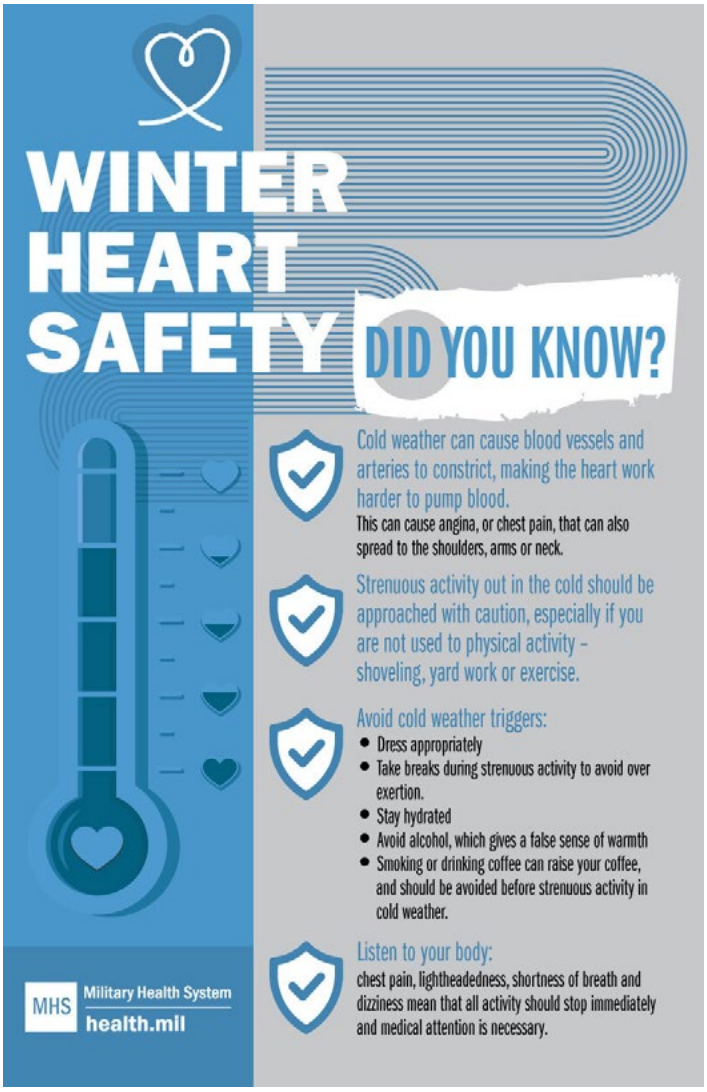
Suggested Social Media Message: Happy Presidents Day!

Winter Heart Safety infographic

Suggested Social Media Message: Educate yourself on how your heart is affected by extreme cold!

#HeartBodySoul *#winter*

https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Total-Force-Fitness/Environmental-Fitness/Winter-Safety



National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (Feb 23-March 3)

Suggested Social Media Message: Eating disorders are not lifestyle choices… they are serious, and sometimes fatal injuries… the good news is that treatment can help.

https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/eating-disorders/index.shtml

National Caregivers Day (Feb 19)

Suggested Social Media Message: Give back to those who give so much. See the resources available to military caregivers.

#caregivers

https://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-wellness/caregivers/

Valentine's Day (Feb 14)

Suggested Social Media Message: Happy Valentine's Day! Treat your heart right today

#ValentinesDay #LoveYourHeart #HeartBodySoul

National Women Physician Day (Feb 3)

Suggested Social Media Message: National Women Physician Day is held every February 3rd to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Elisabeth Blackwell, the first female doctor in the United States. Today, we honor the many thousands of female physicians across the Military Health System caring for patients. Thank you for everything you do! *#NWPD*

Wear Red Day (Feb 5)

Suggested Social Media Message: Do you know if you have a risk factor for heart disease like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or smoking? Finding out can save your life! Join us in raising awareness of heart disease by wearing red this Friday, February 5.

#LoveYourHeart #WearRedDay #HeartBodySoul

Healthy Heart Fact 1

Suggested Social Media Message: Heart disease is one of deadliest disease in the U.S. Learn more about your heart during American Heart Month.

#LoveYourHeart #HeartBodySoul

https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Total-Force-Fitness/Preventive-Health/Heart-Health

Healthy Heart Fact 2

Suggested Social Media Message: A healthy heart is critical to readiness. Learn more about your heart during American Heart Month.

#LoveYourHeart #HeartBodySoul

https://health.mil/News/Articles/2020/02/06/Listen-to-your-heart-in-February-with-Total-Force-Fitness

Healthy Heart Fact 3

Suggested Social Media Message: Preventing heart disease can start with small lifestyle changes. Learn more about your heart during American Heart Month.

#LoveYourHeart #HeartBodySoul

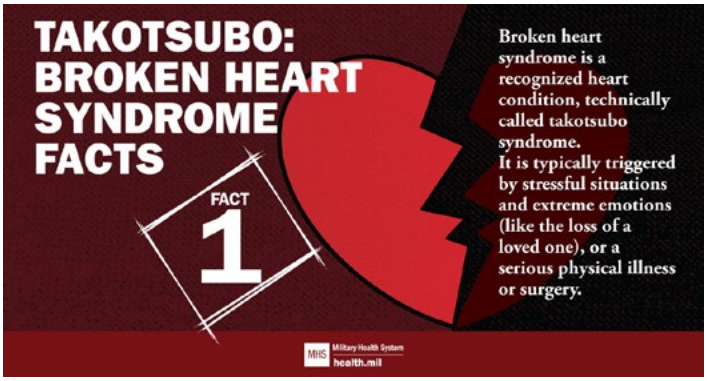
https://www.hprc-online.org/physical-fitness/injury-prevention/reduce-your-risk-heart-disease

Broken Heart Syndrome Fact 1

Suggested Social Media Message: A broken heart can have a real impact on your health! Extreme, sudden stress from a variety of sources can cause symptoms that mimic a heart attack, and can even do lasting damage to your heart.

#LoveYourHeart *#HeartBodySoul*

https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/9400/broken-heart-syndrome

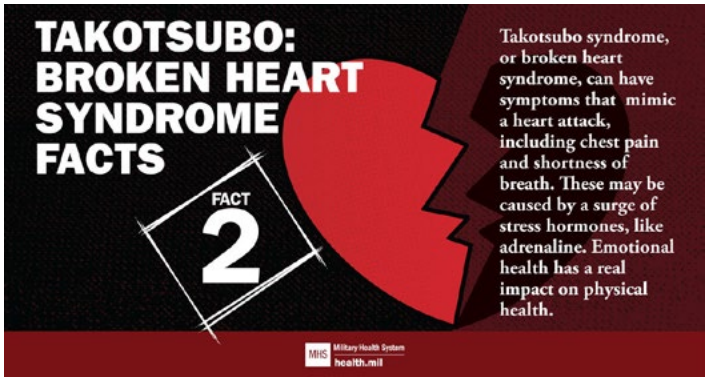


Broken Heart Syndrome Fact 2

Suggested Social Media Message: Sudden, extreme stress, like from an illness or loss of a loved one can have serious impacts on heart health. Strengthening your heart can help bolster your heart against sudden shock and keep your healthier in the long-term.

#LoveYourHeart *#HeartBodySoul*

https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/



Winter Safety 1

Suggested Social Media Message: DYK that extreme cold weather can cause your blood vessels to constrict, making your heart work harder to pump blood? That means you need to take extra care when working or exercising in cold weather

#HeartBodySoul *#winter*

https://www.hprc-online.org/physical-fitness/environmental-extremes/how-prevent-cold-injuries

Winter Safety 2

Suggested Social Media Message: Whether shoveling the walk, or building a shelter during winter training exercises, proper gear prevents injury in extreme weather, and lessens the risk of angina, or chest pain, during strenuous cold weather activity.

#HeartBodySoul #winter

https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Total-Force-Fitness/Environmental-Fitness/Winter-Safety