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News Release

Increase Your Heart Health

By Terri Sory, DCHD Community Health Services Division

(Clearfield, Utah) – Did you know high blood pressure increases your risk for heart disease and stroke, the two leading causes of death in the United States? And, over time, uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to health complications of the eyes, kidneys, and memory.

According to the American Heart Association, nearly one-half of all American adults have hypertension. Surprisingly, only half of those with hypertension know they have it. The only way to know you have hypertension is to have your blood pressure measured.

You can increase your heart health, decrease your risk for developing hypertension, and/or help lower and control your blood pressure by incorporating one or more of the following lifestyle changes:

- **Get moving!** Be physically active for at least 30 minutes 5 days a week.
- **Focus on nutrition.** Eat more fruits, vegetables, nuts/seeds, and whole grains.
- **Watch the sodium.** Aim for 1,500 mg. of sodium or less per day. (Hint! A great way to reduce sodium intake is following the heart healthy diet suggested above.)
- **Take your medication.** If you are prescribed medication for high blood pressure, take it every day. It is important to work with your health care provider to control your blood pressure.
- **Check your blood pressure.** Follow your doctor's recommendations on measuring your blood pressure. Whether at home or a pharmacy, check your blood pressure regularly, track your numbers, and share with your health care provider.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being physically active and eating a healthy diet helps maintain a healthy weight.
- **Watch alcohol intake.** In general, increasing alcohol intake leads to an increase in blood pressure. The heart healthy guideline is no more than two drinks a day for men, one drink a day for women.
- **Stop using tobacco and avoid secondhand smoke.** Tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke leads to heart disease and other health conditions. Nicotine increases blood pressure.

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For more information about high blood pressure, talk with your health care provider or visit the American Heart Association website at https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/the-facts-about-high-blood-pressure/what-is-high-blood-pressure.

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