

The Fashionable Heart



Seeing red? We hope so! Women throughout the country are donning red to bring awareness to American women's number one health threat: heart disease. Historically, heart disease has been considered to be primarily a men's issue, and men have been the subjects of the research on heart disease that is our basis for treatment guidelines. Unfortunately, this means that many women are not aware that heart disease and heart attacks often present differently in women, and that heart disease is their number one killer. Campaigns such as *The Heart Truth* and Go Red for Women are aiming to change that, using fashion to get the message out.

The Heart Truth is a national campaign that aims to spread awareness to women about heart disease. The campaign designed and introduced The Red Dress, a national symbol for women's heart disease awareness, as a "red alert" to remind women of *The Heart Truth's* message: "Heart Disease Doesn't Care What You Wear – It's the #1 Killer of Women." An innovative collaboration between the government and the fashion industry has resulted in *The Heart Truth* Red Dress Collection, in which top fashion designers, models, and celebrities have participated to bring awareness to women about heart disease at New York Fashion Week annually since 2003. The movement has spread, and now several groups take part in red dress campaigns, including fashion shows, trunk shows, and even a collection of red dresses worn by America's First Ladies, and National Wear Red Day, which occurs on the first Friday in February.

As a result of the efforts of multiple campaigns, fewer women are dying of heart disease, and more women are aware that it is their number one health threat. Gender-specific research results have been published, resulting in woman-specific guidelines for prevention and treatment, as well as legislation that aims to end gender disparities. However, heart disease persists as the number one killer of women in America, and women are still dying. There is an

urgent need to spread awareness. Are you ready to join the movement and go red?

Here are just a few fashionable ways to paint your town red:

- Wear more red! Red stands out and draws the eye – not to mention it is said to boost confidence and empowerment. Use your wardrobe to strike up conversations about women and heart disease. And, of course, wear red on National Wear Red Day.
- Attend a local Red Dress fashion show or road show with your friends, and don't forget to wear red!
- Organize your own Red Dress or Wear Red event. Coordinate an event any time of the year with your co-workers, friends, community, or place of worship to spread awareness.
- At work, plan a "Wear Jeans if You Wear Red" day with management, or hold a contest for the best red outfit.
- Plan a Wear Red community walk, or ask local businesses to display The Heart Truth National Wear Red Day posters or offer discounts to customers wearing red on National Wear Red Day.
- Ask your local news anchor to support the cause by wearing red on the air.
- Use social media! Post free National Wear Red Day web banners from The Heart Truth on your blog or website, tweet about National Wear Red Day, or post pictures of yourself wearing red on Facebook to start conversations about women and heart disease.
- Show your support by wearing a red ribbon, The Red Dress pin from The Heart Truth, or red heart disease awareness bracelets.
- Work with your physician to develop a plan for you and your family to go red, and help prevent or manage heart disease.