

Friday is 'National Wear Red Day' for women's heart health

January 31 2013



Allison Janney

Annual event urges Americans to don red to spread awareness of the No. 1 killer.

(HealthDay)—Americans are being urged to look through their closets for anything crimson, scarlet or apple-red to wear Friday, in support of the American Heart Association's annual Go Red for Women campaign.

National Wear Red Day—now in its 10th year—is aimed at raising awareness of heart disease, the leading killer of [women](#).

"An estimated 43 million women in the U.S. are affected by heart disease, yet only one in five women believe heart disease is her greatest [health threat](#)," Dr. Jennifer Mieres, a professor of cardiology and [senior vice president](#) of community and public health at North Shore-LIJ Health System in Lake Success, N.Y., said in an American Heart

Association statement.

Celebrities are also taking part in the campaign. Allison Janney, star of TV's *The West Wing* and movies such as *Juno* and *The Help*, said she was "shocked to learn that heart disease is more deadly than all forms of cancer combined.

"My mother's quadruple [bypass surgery](#) was an eye-opening experience," Janney said in the news release. "I'm now making heart-healthy changes to reduce my own risk, and have joined with Go Red for Women to educate other women about what they can do."

This year, the American Heart Association is asking for more than Americans' attire to turn red on Friday. Across the country, landmarks and buildings will be dressed in the color, starting with the iconic Macy's Herald Square building in New York City, which plans to "go red" Thursday evening.

Even though the American Heart Association estimates that the Go Red for Women campaign has already raised awareness and saved more than 627,000 lives since its inception, the statistics on women and heart disease remain grim:

- One woman dies from heart disease each minute.
- Far from being solely a "man's disease," female deaths from heart disease have exceeded the death toll for men since 1984.
- One in every 31 women will die from [breast cancer](#), while one in every three women will lose their life to heart disease.
- Nine out of 10 women now have one or more risk factors for heart disease.

Despite the death toll, many women still remain unaware of the threat. According to the American Heart Association, only one in five women know that heart disease is the leading killer of women, and they also comprise just 24 percent of participants in heart-related studies, the association noted.

But there are things every woman can do to reduce her risk for heart trouble. According to the [American Heart Association](#), women who say they have been made more aware of the dangers through the Go Red campaign typically made healthy changes. For example, more than a third said they have lost excess pounds, more than half said they are exercising more and a third said they have talked to their physicians about developing a "heart health plan."

"It's so important to understand your personal risk factors and often overlooked common symptoms, and to share that information with the women you love," Mieres said.

Janney agreed, noting that there is strength in numbers as women come together to fight [heart disease](#). "Together," she said, "women have the power to save our own lives."

More information: Find out about Go Red for Women [events in your area](#).

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