

## Double Your Impact for Healthy Hearts



Heart disease remains the leading killer of women in the U.S., according to the American Heart Association's newly released 2021 Heart Disease & Stroke Statistics. Every year it kills one woman approximately every 80 seconds, taking more lives than all forms of cancer combined.<sup>1</sup> There are a lot of things that pharmacists can do to help prevent its occurrence or minimize the complications that may arise from established heart disease.

With February known as “American Heart Month,” it is essential not only to bring awareness this month but every month of the year. Here are some tips on how your pharmacy can raise awareness on heart disease and show off your health knowledge, promote your products and services and keep your patient's hearts healthy.

### **Tip 1: Offer Heart Healthy Services**

Help patients manage their health and get the most out of their medications by offering screenings and prevention services. A few “heart-healthy” services a pharmacist may provide to help prevent a heart attack or improve knowledge about effective treatment include blood pressure, cholesterol, body mass index (BMI) screenings, smoking cessation, and healthy lifestyle counseling. Consider offering free or low-cost “Know Your Numbers” heart-health screenings and let your patients make appointments in advance.

### **Tip 2: Identify Right Medications**

On average, heart failure patients take 6.8 prescription medications per day, resulting in 10.1 doses a day. This estimate does not include over-the-counter medications or alternative treatments.<sup>2</sup> It is crucial for you, the pharmacist, to discuss all the drugs your patients take and understand their desired effects and possible side effects. Instruct your patients never to stop

taking a medication and never change their dose or frequency without consulting the prescribing physician or pharmacist. For patients on aspirin therapy, recommending a high-quality generic brand may save them money over branded products while also earning higher margins for your pharmacy.

### Tip 3: Go Red Once a Month

Wearing red once or a few times a month is a great way to show support. Encourage your staff to style themselves in red and share a photo on social to make a bold statement for a great cause. Create a hashtag (ex: #RxRedHearts) and spread the word to your patients and let them also connect with other heart heroes who have made promises to their hearts and to live healthier lifestyles.

### Closing Thoughts

Double your impact and help assist in managing cardiovascular disease and raise awareness for healthy hearts not only during February but all year long. Together, the pharmacist and patient can ensure that a healthy heart keeps pumping into the future.

Not sure where to start? Through our partnership with Aspire Health, Keystone can provide the resources and support to assist in managing cardiovascular disease. For any questions, please connect with your Keystone Business Consultant via email at [info@kpparx.com](mailto:info@kpparx.com).

#### Sources:

1. <https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/heart-and-stroke-association-statistics>
2. <https://familywize.org/blog/which-drugs-may-be-dangerous-for-heart-health>