1. Illicit substances like cocaine, heroin and amphetamines can take a toll on the heart. Care for your heart by avoiding these kinds of drugs, taking prescription and over-the-counter drugs correctly and quitting smoking, along with having a healthy diet and engaging in physical activity. The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center’s Heart Health Month toolkit has other tips for loving your heart. Find it at go.usa.gov/xETs9.

2. You may be considering taking some leftover pain medication from old dental work for a new backache. While that medication was prescribed to you, it can still be risky to take it, especially if it was prescribed over six months ago. Talk to your provider or try a non-prescription pain medication if you’re experiencing pain to avoid a positive drug test. Protect your career.

3. After the November elections, four new states have legalized recreational cannabis. Marijuana laws applying to civilians do not apply to Sailors and other service members. Navy policy prohibits the use of any cannabis product, so avoid them even if local laws say they’re okay.

4. If your “Dry January” went so well, you’re thinking of permanently cutting back, find some tips on responsible drinking from Own Your Limits. Visit the campaign at OwnYourLimits.org for tips and tools for service members to moderate their drinking habits.

This Heart Health month is a good time to become informed of medications and supplements that can harm your heart. Many think of “heart failure” as a complete heart stoppage, but it is actually a condition in which the heart doesn’t pump blood as well as it should. Symptoms include shortness of breath, weakness and swollen feet and legs. One in five people will develop heart failure in their lifetime. Health problems such as diabetes or heart disease can cause it, but common medications can as well. The more prescriptions, over-the-counter (OTC) medications or supplements one takes, the higher the likelihood of having an adverse reaction that can harm the heart.

**Prescription Drugs**

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammation drugs (NSAIDs) such as diclofenac, ibuprofen, indomethacin, and ketorolac are commonly prescribed pain relievers. NSAIDs cause water retention, making it harder for blood to flow. Diabetes medications including thiazolidinedione can also cause fluid retention and weight gain, increasing the likelihood of heart failure. Blood pressure medications can also cause fluid retention which may result from the calcium channel blockers used to treat hypertension.

**OTC Medications and Supplements**

OTC medications may seem harmless, but many contain NSAIDs, which can increase the risk of heart failure, as mentioned. Some cold medicines and nasal decongestants contain ibuprofen or other ingredients that can narrow your blood vessels. Looking for the word “vasoconstrictor” on the label is helpful.

Vitamins and natural supplements can also be toxic for your heart. Supplements may interact with medications you are taking, so be sure to list everything you take when speaking to your doctor and consider eliminating any supplements not truly needed. Avoid products containing ephedra or ephedrine, which can affect the blood pressure and heart rate. Vitamins A, D, and E are fat-soluble, meaning they can accumulate in the body and lead to toxicity and organ damage, coma, and even death. Regular health checkups can reveal any vitamin deficiencies and whether supplementation is necessary.

**Protecting Your Heart**

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, with approximately 600,000 deaths per year. Maintaining a healthy weight, getting regular exercise, quitting smoking, drinking responsibly and managing stress are important preventative measures to protect your heart health. Having honest conversations with your doctor about your habits and discussing the potential risks of all medications and supplements you take can ensure you receive the best care from your health providers.
A NEW HEALTH AND WELLNESS HUB

The Real Good Day (RGD) campaign team thinks each day is a chance to take care of yourself, your family and your community better than ever before. Having a real good day looks different for everyone, but RGD is here to help you figure out what it means for you — whenever, wherever.

Real Good Day wants to build a community focused on sharing health and wellness strategies that work (and tweak those that don’t work), how to navigate the good times and the bad times, and how to get through all the other crazy stuff life throws our way.

Here’s just some of the ways the campaign plans to help:

- Share ideas, tools and resources to aid in your personal growth
- Provide tips and tricks to help you get enough sleep, eat right, exercise, manage stress, drink responsibly (if you choose to drink!), and properly use and dispose of prescription drugs
- Help you recognize the connection between yourself and something bigger and the importance of your daily actions
- Normalize expressing emotions and remind you that no matter the type, investing in relationships helps improve wellness

The Real Good Day campaign is excited to find new ways to make your day and looks forward to getting to know you better. Follow the Real Good Day campaign on Instagram and Twitter at @RGDCampaign and on Medium at rgdcampaign.medium.com — just for the health of it.

SAFE USE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

DoD Instruction (DODI) 1010.16, Technical Procedures for the Military Personnel Drug Abuse Testing Program (MPDATP) clarifies the expiration of prescription drugs.

The instruction states that if there is no specified time period when the drug is prescribed, a prescription for any substance included on Schedules II through V of Section 812 of Title 21, United States Code, will be considered expired six months after the most recent date of filling, as indicated on the prescription label.

These medications include narcotics for pain such as prescription opioids, certain stimulants and anxiety medications. If you are unsure about a medication or need to clarify the expiration, always check with the provider who prescribed the medication.

Expired medications should be safely disposed of to protect your and your family’s health. Some military treatment facilities have drop boxes for prescription drugs, and many pharmacies take back old and expired medications.

CURRENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY DDD WEBINARS
Each webinar is scheduled for 1000-1130 CT and 1700-1830 CT.
4—SURFOR (LANT&PAC) Dialogue/Addressing Issues Involving the Portal & WebDTP
11—Adjudication of Drug Positives
18—Managing Discrepancies
25—WebDTP/DTP Lite Updates
Learn more and stay up-to-date by visiting www.ddd.navy.mil

ADAMS FOR LEADERS, DAPA & UPC COURSES
Can be accessed using your CAC by logging in to MyNavy Portal (MNP) at my.navy.mil or Catalog of Navy Training Courses (CANTRAC) at app.prod.cetars.training.navy.mil/cantrac/vol2.html

NMCPHC HEART HEALTH MONTH
February
Find the toolbox at go.usa.gov/xETS9.

NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY
February 5
Learn more women and heart health at goredforwomen.org.