

# World Heart Day

Sunday, September 26, 2010

**World Heart Day is globally held on the last Sunday of September each year to inform people about cardiovascular diseases, which are the biggest cause of death worldwide. The event also aims to promote preventative measures that reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.**



*Healthy eating is one of the lifestyle topics promoted on World Heart Day. ©iStockphoto.com/Catherine Yeulet*

## What do people do?

Many people around the world unite with governments and non-government organizations celebrate and promote World Heart Day each year. Activities include fun runs, public talks, concerts, and sporting events. The World Heart Federation organizes awareness events in more than 100 countries. They include:

- Health checks.
- Organized walks, runs and fitness sessions.
- Public talks.
- Stage shows.
- Scientific forums.
- Exhibitions.
- Concerts.
- Carnivals.
- Sports tournaments.

These activities are done in partnership with organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), which is the UN's directing and coordinating authority for health.

## **Public life**

World Heart Day is a global observance but it is not a public holiday.

## **Background**

Cardiovascular diseases are the number one cause of death worldwide and this is projected to remain so, according to WHO. About 17.5 million people died from cardiovascular disease in 2005, representing 30 percent of all global deaths. Risk factors that may lead to heart disease and stroke include:

- Raised blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels.
- Smoking.
- Inadequate intake of fruit and vegetables.
- Overweight.
- Obesity.
- Physical inactivity.

World Heart Day was created to inform people around the globe that heart disease and stroke are the world's leading cause of death. Together with organizations such as WHO, the World Heart Federation spreads the news that at least 80 percent of premature deaths from heart disease and stroke could be avoided if the main risk factors – which are tobacco, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity – are controlled. World Heart Day started in 1999 and is held on the last Sunday of September every year.