

Media Contact:

Angela Deja
Public Relations Director
(920) 272-3360
angela.deja@prevea.com



How diet, exercise and lifestyle changes can decrease risk for heart disease An important reminder during Heart Month in February

GREEN BAY, Wis. - With February being American Heart Month, Prevea Health interventional cardiologist, [Dr. Simil Gala](#), reminds everyone the importance of a balanced diet, regular exercise and implementing lifestyle changes to help prevent heart disease.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. It's estimated that every four deaths are from heart disease and stroke, contributing to conditions which are among the leading causes of disabilities in the country.

Dr. Gala frequently shares the following diet, exercise disciplines and lifestyle choices to help combat and prevent the disease:

Exercise: Regular exercise, especially aerobic exercise, is beneficial for heart health. Aerobic exercise (walking, running, biking and swimming) increases your heart rate and breathing and in turn enhances the efficiency of your heart and lungs.

Eat heart healthy food: Eating a balanced diet of nutrient-rich foods including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats can help maintain a healthy heart. Try to limit unhealthy fat, excess sodium and cholesterol. Heart healthy fats to consider eating include avocados, walnuts, olive oil, dark chocolate, eggs, salmon and tuna. Avoid unhealthy trans and saturated fats like bacon, whole milk, fried and highly processed foods.

Quit smoking: Tobacco use is harmful to your health in multiple ways, including increasing heart rate and blood pressure. Quitting smoking and tobacco use has immediate and long-term benefits for cardiovascular health.

Eliminate stress: Chronic stress can elevate blood pressure and contribute to unhealthy lifestyle choices. Managing your stress with activities such as exercise and relaxation techniques can help reduce the risk of heart disease and promote overall well-being.

Yearly physical exams with a primary care physician or provider can also help in the early detection of and management of heart disease. For individuals with high risk factors such as tobacco use, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or a family history of heart disease, a visit with a physician or provider can also help assess an individual's situation and potentially lead to a referral with a cardiovascular specialist if necessary.

Prevea heart care is offered in Oconto, Oconto Falls and Green Bay. Key services offered by Dr. Gala for cardiovascular care in each of the regions include cardiovascular disease prevention and screenings; management of coronary artery disease, valve disorders and heart failure; nuclear stress testing and echocardiography. Additional services at HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center and HSHS St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay include cardiac catheterization; coronary angioplasty and stenting and transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR). For more information about Prevea heart care, visit: <https://www.prevea.com/medical-services/specialty-care/cardiology>

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About Prevea Health

Prevea Health is a community of passionate and accomplished physicians, caregivers and staff working together to provide exceptional health care. Patients have trusted Prevea with their medical care needs since 1996 when the organization was founded in Green Bay, Wis. Today, Prevea provides primary care and a wide range of specialty medical care in clinic, hospital, and workplace settings across Northeast Wisconsin. It is partnered with Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) which operates hospitals in Wisconsin. For more information about Prevea Health, visit www.prevea.com

About HSHS St. Vincent Hospital and HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center

HSHS St. Vincent Hospital and HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center have been delivering quality health care to Green Bay and its surrounding communities since 1888. With HSHS St. Vincent being the largest tertiary care hospital and HSHS St. Mary's location on Green Bay's west side, patients from Northeastern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan benefit from a comprehensive range of services that include cancer care, women's services, emergency and trauma care, preventive care across the lifespan, digestive health, orthopedic, cardiac care, neurosciences, rehabilitation and pediatrics. Affiliates of Hospital Sisters Health System, the hospitals primary purpose is to continue Christ's healing love through the delivery of competent and compassionate health care in an environment sensitive to the needs of all people. Both hospitals are accredited by the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

About HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital

HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital serves Oconto Falls and the surrounding communities as a federally designated critical access hospital with a 24-hour emergency department; inpatient and outpatient surgical and diagnostic services; cancer care; therapy and rehabilitation; wound care; the Almost Home Swing Bed program; and more. It was founded as Oconto Falls City Hospital in 1921 and became HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital in 2014 when it joined Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS). As an affiliate of HSHS, HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital draws on the history of St. Francis of Assisi as it serves the health care needs of the region in Christ's healing ministry, caring for all people. HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital also has five rural health center locations in affiliation with Prevea Health in Gillett, Lena, Mountain, Oconto Falls and Suring; and operates HSHS Pharmacies in Gillett and Oconto Falls, and HSHS Prescription Services (remote dispensing sites) in Lena, Mountain and Pulaski. In 2022, HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital was named a Top 100 Critical Access Hospital in the U.S. by The Chartis Center for Rural Health. For more information about St. Clare, please visit: www.stclarememorial.org

About Hospital Sisters Health System

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high-quality Franciscan healthcare ministry. HSHS provides compassionate, quality healthcare to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable. HSHS operates physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states – Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville, and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan, and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](http://www.hshs.org) is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org