

Show your heart some love this Valentine's Day



Valentine's Day is often associated with chocolates, flowers, and celebrating the people we care about. But it's also the perfect reminder to take care of something equally important: heart health.

While we show love to others this month, it's just as vital to show a little love to ourselves – and prioritising heart health is one of the most meaningful ways to do that.

Why your heart deserves the love

Your heart works tirelessly for you every second of every day. Yet cardiovascular disease remains one of the leading health challenges across the UK. The good news? Many of the biggest risk factors are modifiable, and small lifestyle changes can make a big difference.

So this Valentine's Day, here are some simple, evidence-informed ways to keep your heart strong – and boost your overall wellbeing too.

Move your body daily



Regular physical activity helps:

- ♡ Strengthen the heart
- ♡ Improve circulation
- ♡ Lower blood pressure
- ♡ Reduce stress

Aim for **150 minutes of moderate activity per week**, such as brisk walking, cycling, or swimming. Even 10-minute bursts throughout the day add up. (Source: American College of Sport Medicine)

Top tip: Choose activities you enjoy – it's much easier to stay consistent.

Heart-healthy foods



You don't have to abandon your favourite Valentine's treats – it's all about balance.

A heart-friendly diet includes:

- ♡ Plenty of fruit and vegetables
- ♡ Whole grains
- ♡ Lean proteins
- ♡ Heart-healthy fats like nuts, olive oil, and oily fish

Try swapping salty snacks for something fresh, or adding an extra portion of veg to meals. Small, sustainable changes are far more effective than strict diets.

Prioritise quality rest



Your heart benefits from downtime just as much as your mind does.

Poor sleep can affect blood pressure, stress hormones, and overall cardiovascular health.

Most adults need **7–9** hours of quality sleep a night.

Try this: Keep a consistent bedtime routine, avoid screens before bed, and create a calm sleeping environment.

Manage your stress



Stress is part of life, but too much for too long can impact heart health.

Healthy coping strategies include:

- ♡ Gentle exercise
- ♡ Mindfulness/breathing exercises
- ♡ Talking to someone you trust
- ♡ Spending time in nature

Even a few minutes of purposeful relaxation each day can make a noticeable difference.

Stop smoking and reduce alcohol



Stopping smoking is one of the most powerful ways to protect your heart.

Reducing alcohol intake also helps maintain healthy blood pressure and lowers long-term risk.

If this is something you're working on, support is available – and asking for help is a positive step.

A heartfelt reminder

Valentine's Day is about connection, kindness, and showing care – and that includes caring for yourself. Making small, heart-healthy choices doesn't require dramatic lifestyle overhauls. It's about gentle, everyday habits that build resilience and wellbeing over time.

So this February, whether you're spending the day with a partner, friends, family, or enjoying your own company, remember to show your heart a little love too.

Your future self will thank you for it.