

February is American Heart Month! Here Are a Few Heart Facts

By Jacqueline Pike

As we inch a little closer to spring, winter weather remains unpredictable. Cold temps and icy conditions can keep us indoors and apart from those we enjoy spending time with.

If, by chance you're experiencing the winter blues, read on.

Sharing "A Few Heart Facts" with those you care about might be a fun way to lift your mood and help you to feel closer and less isolated.

Learning about your heart can be fun and educational. You might even impress your Cardiologist on your next visit.

- The human heart is the hollow and central muscular organ of the blood-vascular system, responsible for pumping blood to the rest of the body.
- The heart is uniform in healthy individuals and consists of four chambers or cavities. The right and left sides are divided by an anatomical partition called a septum. Each half is further divided into the upper atria and lower ventricles.
- The heart has 4 valves. The mitral and tricuspid valves act as one-way inlets and outlets for blood in and out of the heart. The aortic and pulmonary valves open and close to allow blood to flow to the rest of the body and to the lungs.

Humans do quite well with four chambers. You know that unlovable insect, the cockroach? They have a heart with twelve chambers! The chambers are arranged in a row and powered by a separate set of muscles. If one chamber fails, the cockroach is barely affected. Heartwarming, right?

Click [here](#) to learn more about the human heart.

Hearts come in all sizes.

- The human heart is often described as being the size of a fist, measuring roughly 5 inches long x 3 inches wide x 2.5 inches thick.
- The average female heart weighs approximately 8-10 ounces, males 10-12 ounces.
- The heart of a human newborn is about the size of a large walnut.
- The smallest mammal heart is that of the mouse-like shrew at just 2 grams.
- The tiniest heart is that of the Fairyfly. You need a microscope to see it.
- The largest heart belongs to the Blue Whale, weighing in at approximately 400lbs, the size of a small golf cart.

For those of you who like a bit of history, President Lyndon B. Johnson established February as American Heart Month in December of 1963. The very first American Heart Month was celebrated in February 1964. The goal was to encourage Americans to join the battle against heart disease. Unfortunately, the battle isn't over. Heart disease is still a major health problem for many men and women. Thankfully, science, technology, and medicine continue to play a significant role in helping people live better and longer lives.

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