

**EMBARGOED FOR TUESDAY, June 13, 2006 (6:00 am ET)**

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**Survey finds many women don't realize physical activity is as important to heart health as other risk factors such as cholesterol, blood pressure and smoking**

*Joan Lunden helps women choose to move*

DALLAS, June 13, 2006 – The majority of women surveyed do not realize that being physically active is as important to their heart health as managing other modifiable risk factors such as cholesterol, blood pressure and smoking. In fact, like those risk factors, a person is 1.5 to 2.4 times more likely to have coronary heart disease if they are inactive.

The most common goal women have over the next 10 years is to improve their health, lose weight or exercise more – but only 15 percent are willing to become more physically active to achieve their goals, according to a survey from the American Heart Association's **Choose To Move** program. The survey was conducted in February 2006 by a market research firm, Synovate, Inc.

"These results demonstrate a significant disconnect between women's desires and what they are actually doing about it," said Joan Lunden, award-winning television journalist, author and busy mother of seven children. She understands the challenge and has signed up for the Choose To Move program. "Women acknowledge that getting more physical activity in their lives can make them look and feel better and improve their chances for a longer, healthier life, yet few are making the moves to accomplish that goal," Lunden said.

The American Heart Association knows women have many family, career and life demands. By choosing to move, women can have the energy to meet those demands and be around for their loved ones in the future.

"Women are confused about how physical inactivity contributes to their risk of heart disease," said Jennifer H. Mieres, M.D., F.A.C.C., F.A.C.P, Director of Nuclear Cardiology at North Shore University Hospital, and assistant professor of medicine at New York University. "While 98 percent of women surveyed said they believe physical activity impacts their health, **only** one in 10 women includes adequate physical activity in her weekly routine." This

would include moderate-to-vigorous intensity aerobics such as brisk walking, swimming or biking for at least 30 minutes or more on most days, preferably all days, of the week.

Women can overcome physical inactivity and obesity with **Choose To Move** – the American Heart Association’s free 12-week program that includes tips on how to incorporate physical activity and a flavorful, healthy diet into their lives. **Choose To Move** provides participants with an easy-to-follow plan, a helpful handbook, monthly e-mails with suggestions for physical activity, tips on how to stay motivated and recipes with nutrition information. Easy-to-use tips include:

- The weather is warmer now, so take a walk after dinner instead of watching TV.
- Park a few blocks from the office or store and walk.
- Plan snacks the same way you plan meals. Instead of carrying a candy bar or a bag of chips between all the hustle and bustle, bring a container of fat-free or low-fat yogurt, a handful of roasted almonds or a homemade snack mix made with a salt-free seasoning blend.
- Get your spouse and kids to go on a play date with you. It’s great for family togetherness while fitting in fitness.
- Take an activity break. Get up, stretch and walk around.

**Choose To Move** is part of the American Heart Association’s **Go Red For Women** national movement to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease as the No. 1 killer of women and how to reduce the risk. Women can register for the program by visiting [americanheart.org/choosetomove](http://americanheart.org/choosetomove) or calling 1-888-MY-HEART (1-888-694-3278).

Register now and receive a **Choose To Move** X Band with instructional poster while supplies last. This resistance band is a perfect way for you to incorporate strength training into your every day, whether at work, home or traveling. Just stick it in your bag and go!

Check out the **Choose To Move**’s “online neighborhood” discussion board to share your success stories and tips for staying motivated. Let your “neighbors” know how the program is working for you and also get help from them. Visit us at [my.americanheart.org/jiveforum/index.jspa](http://my.americanheart.org/jiveforum/index.jspa)

The Almond Board of California and the Mrs. Dash brand sponsor **Choose To Move**.

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Founded in 1924, the **American Heart Association** today is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to reducing disability and death from heart disease and stroke. These diseases, America’s No. 1 and No. 3 killers, and all other cardiovascular diseases, claim more than 910,000 lives a year. In fiscal year 2004–05 the association invested over \$473 million in research, professional and public education, advocacy and community service

programs to help all Americans live longer, healthier lives. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org).

The **Almond Board of California** is a sponsor of the American Heart Association's **Choose To Move** program. The Board administers a grower-enacted Federal Marketing Order under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Established in 1950, its charge is to promote the best quality almonds, California's largest tree nut crop. For more information on the Almond Board of California or almonds, visit [www.AlmondsAreIn.com](http://www.AlmondsAreIn.com).

The **Mrs. Dash** brand is a sponsor of the American Heart Association's **Choose To Move** program. Every product from Mrs. Dash is made with a unique combination of 14 natural herbs and spices that's salt-free with no MSG. Mrs. Dash 10-Minute Marinades and Hamburger Grilling blend are the latest addition to the Mrs. Dash family of products. Visit [mrsdash.com](http://mrsdash.com) for hundreds of delicious, low-salt recipes.