Health News S Wear Red Day draws attention to heart disease

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NEW YORK (WABC) -- Friday is national Wear Red Day, and the Empire State Building is decked out in red.

Mount Sinai Medical Center offered free heart screenings for women, just one of many events around the country marking the American Heart Association's Go Red For Women campaign.

It is meant draw attention to women's heart health, as many women don't know if they're at risk for heart disease or what puts them at risk.

Red is the color of your heart, so that's the basis for Wear Red Day to make women aware that heart disease is still the number one killer of women in the country. It's seven times deadlier than breast cancer, even in young women.

"Young women don't realize that they might be at risk for heart attack," said Dr. Liliana Cohen, of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. "More than 10,000 women a year suffer heart attacks under the age of 45."

So at Robert Wood Johnson, women are checking for risk factors of a heart attack, such as high blood pressure, a high blood cholesterol or a family history of heart disease. Beth Kalt had intense left shoulder pain and knew it might be a heart attack.

"My father had gone into cardiac arrest," she said. "He was only 60"

Beth then read up on heart disease and perhaps saved her own life by being aware of risk factors, such as smoking. But even quitting still leaves you at higher heart risk for the next 20 to 30 years.

Heart risk factors have a multiplying effect. Having two of them increases risk four-fold. Having three increases it 10-fold.

So how can a woman reduce her risk?

"Diet, exercise, more that I should be doing than I am doing," Wear Red attendee Helen Szentgyorgyi said.

Women should also see a doctor for a checkup if she can't get to the next Wear Red Day screening. And make sure your doctor speaks in terms you can understand.

"Women tend to put the familiy before them," said Dr. Subha Gowda, of Robert Wood Johnson. "So that's a very important reason that women die more, are not identified and have higher heart death."

And take action if you think something is wrong.

"Trust your instincts," Galt said. "Don't worry what if I'm wrong? What if you're right and you save your life?"

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