



February 14, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

Why Are Hearts Red?

Today is the day that we celebrate our special loved one. The red heart is the symbol of Valentine's Day, and that goes right along with this month's theme. One of the reasons that your heart appears red is that it has such a great blood supply. That might not seem terribly romantic, but hang in here with me.

Your heart has to beat, without fail, just about every second you're alive. In order to do that, it needs nutrients on a regular basis. Those nutrients travel to the heart via a special blood supply—the coronary arteries. Just as the term implies, these are blood vessels that serve the heart tissue only. They bring in nutrients such as carbohydrates and fat; yes, your heart uses fat as fuel. It also needs plenty of oxygen to convert those fuels into energy in the form of ATP. That happens in the cell's powerhouse called the mitochondria. Your heart even stores some oxygen in a special protein called myoglobin, and being dark red in color, it also makes the heart look red.

So when you're with your loved one today and you give him or her the card or the candy or the balloon with the red heart, take a second and appreciate what the blood supply to your heart does. Without it, you wouldn't be able to enjoy that special person in your life. Make it a priority to take care of your heart from now on so that you have many more Valentine's Days to spend together.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

WGUV FM 88.5/95.3 **npr** ***Straight Talk on Health***

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