Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women. About 61 million people in the United States have heart disease—which contributes to about 40 percent of all deaths—according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease accounts for more deaths in women in the United States than the next six causes of death combined. That’s why in February 2007 new guidelines for preventing heart disease in women were established that emphasize lifestyle modifications, physical activity, a heart-healthy diet, and weight control.

In March, interventional cardiologist Lou Kumar, MD, will be joining Avera St. Luke’s to help us grow into a more comprehensive cardiovascular service that offers procedures such as coronary angioplasties and coronary stenting. Cardiologist Larry Sidaway, MD, will continue serving the Aberdeen area through the North Central Heart Institute clinic located in Avera St. Luke’s Hospital’s new southeast addition.

The finest care locally is provided through Avera HeartCARE services at Avera St. Luke’s. It gives people in the area immediate access to our network of cardiac care:

- New intensive care unit with Avera eICU CARE with 24-hour monitoring by specialists
- Cardiac catheterization lab and peripheral vascular lab
- Cardiac CT calcium scoring
- Nuclear medicine, stress testing, EKG, echocardiography, and Holter monitoring
- 24-hour emergency care and Careflight air transport
- Cardiologists and critical care specialists
- Cardiac rehabilitation program
- Links to our cardiac care technology and specialists via mobile services and telehealth
- Confidence knowing that Avera St. Luke’s is an Avera Quality Award winner for our congestive heart failure program
- Cardiac education and preventive screenings. For more information, go to www.averastlukes.org and click on “Classes and Events.”

Plus, our partnership with the top-rated Avera Heart Hospital of South Dakota provides a direct link to the best cardiac care in the nation. To learn more, go to www.averastlukes.org and try the free heart-health risk assessment or one of our other wellness tools.

Join us on Thursday, Feb. 21, for an evening of fun. “Dueling Dietitians” Nikki Ver Steeg and Joanne Shearer from Avera Heart Hospital of South Dakota will show us how to combine our prairie style of eating with the health benefits of a Mediterranean-style diet.

This Aberdeen “dinner theater” event sponsored by Avera St. Luke’s will feature a heart-healthy meal served at 6:30 p.m. Booths and displays will open at 5:30 p.m. and the “Dueling Dietitians” will begin at about 7:15 p.m.

Reserved-seating tickets for this event at the Ramkota Convention Center are available at Dacotah Bank in downtown Aberdeen. Tickets will not be sold at the door. For more information, visit our website.

www.averastlukes.org
Need more motivation to move off the couch? Physical activity could help save your sight by warding off an eye disease common among older adults. Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is an eye disease that can eventually destroy the sharp, central vision critical to tasks like reading and driving. The more advanced form—“wet” AMD—causes sight loss when abnormal blood vessels grow and leak into the eye.

NO SWEAT
Researchers reviewed the health and habits of nearly 4,000 people between the ages of 43 and 86 during a period of 15 years. Those who exercised even moderately—at least three times a week—were 70 percent less likely to develop wet AMD than those who were sedentary.

Walking regularly also helped older people avoid the disease. In the study, people older than 65 who routinely walked more than 12 blocks each day had 30 percent less chance of wet AMD than those who walked less.

HOW IT WORKS
Exercise may help in a couple of ways. People who are physically active often age slower than those who are less active—and macular degeneration is connected to aging. Also, physical activity reduces inflammation and the collapse of cells that line blood vessels in the eyes and elsewhere. Both seem to play a role in the disease.

Get Active, Avoid Repetitive Stress Injury

Being physically active has many benefits. Can it help decrease the risk for repetitive strain injuries (RSI) like tendonitis? Nearly 60,000 full-time workers were asked if they had an RSI in the past year. Researchers looked only at injuries of the upper body due to work tasks. Those who were active every day were about 15 percent less likely to develop an injury compared to those who were not active.

MORE ABOUT VISION
One of the most popular ways to correct vision is LASIK, which uses a laser to change the curvature of the cornea. LASIK has quickly become the procedure of choice for patients because they recover quickly and have fewer side effects and complications than with other methods of vision correction.

Dr. John Bormes and Dr. Curt Wischmeier of Ophthalmology Associates perform this procedure at Avera St. Luke’s in addition to offering other eye surgeries such as cataract removal and lens replacement.

Protect Your Eyesight ... with **EXERCISE**?

Who would have thought that a walk around the block might help your future eyesight?
Avera Links with CaringBridge

Avera is now a partner with CaringBridge, a nonprofit organization offering free, personalized websites that allow people to stay in touch with family and friends during a health crisis, treatment, and recovery.

With a few keystrokes, CaringBridge users quickly and easily create private websites to display personal journal entries and photographs. Family and friends visit the site to read updates and leave messages of support in the guestbook.

CaringBridge provides Avera St. Luke’s with yet another way to minister to the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. The goal of the service is to ease the burden of keeping friends and family updated, while providing a way for them to send their love, support, and encouragement.

Sona Mehring founded CaringBridge in 1997 when a friend developed a life-threatening pregnancy. Mehring created a website to help the family communicate with a wide circle of people without disturbing the mother’s need for rest or placing extra demands on hospital staff. In just 10 years, nearly 70,000 CaringBridge sites have been created so family members and friends can stay informed and show their loved ones support. Nearly 450 million visits have been made to CaringBridge sites.

Avera St. Luke’s sees CaringBridge as an important tool for a family’s well-being, while giving them an outlet to share their feelings. Nurses and other staff members often encourage families to leave their bedside vigil; updating their CaringBridge website can provide a needed break.

Information and brochures about CaringBridge can be found throughout Avera St. Luke’s, including by computers that hospital visitors, friends, and families can access in certain waiting areas. For more details, go to Avera St. Luke’s website at www.averastlukes.org and find the link on our home page or go to www.caringbridge.org/avera.

Take Precaution When Dining Out if You Have Food Allergies

If you have a food allergy, dining out can be a challenge—and there is cause for concern. In a survey of 100 restaurant employees, nearly one-fourth did not know that even small amounts of food can cause a serious reaction.

To enjoy a safe meal, follow these tips when eating out:

- Tell the restaurant staff about your food allergy.
- Always ask about ingredients to which you are allergic.
- Be prepared and have a plan for what to do in case you have a reaction.

Avera St. Luke’s Clinic Expands to Three Full-Time Pediatricians

Avera St. Luke’s recently welcomed three new pediatricians. Dr. Georgia C. Santos-Jawaid has joined Dr. Saeedeh Salmanzadeh and Dr. Masoud Noruzian at Aberdeen Pediatrics, part of the clinic division of Avera St. Luke’s, located in Physicians Plaza, 201 S. Lloyd St.

“We are excited to have three full-time pediatricians to serve the needs of the Aberdeen region,” said Lisa Reich, clinic manager of the Avera St. Luke’s Clinic Division. “We welcome the highly qualified skills of these professionals for the care of our children.”
We are heading into February, which is always associated with matters of the heart. But I’m not referring to valentines and chocolates. I’m referring to matters of heart health. At Avera St. Luke’s, we are very excited that we will be offering new heart services with the addition of an interventional cardiologist to our medical staff. This type of specialist adds more versatility to our cardiac cath lab, allowing us to perform treatments such as angioplasty and stenting procedures.

Our goal is to keep you and your family closer to home for your care. As we add more sophisticated services in Aberdeen, we do just that. Plus, our partnership with the Avera Heart Hospital of South Dakota gives you a direct link to nationally top-rated cardiac care, if needed.

When you buy that pretty card with hearts and terms of endearment, rest assured that we are looking out for you and your family’s heart health. That is our Valentine gift to you.

Have you ever looked in your medicine cabinet for a prescription or over-the-counter medication only to find that it was expired? When that happens, what should you do?

Generally, expired medication isn’t dangerous. But if the drug is past its expiration date, it may be less effective. Over time, medication loses its potency—especially tablets and capsules.

Exposure to air, light, and moisture increases this process for all types of medicine. That’s why it’s so important to store drugs in a cool, dry, dark place. For example, avoid keeping medicines in bathrooms or by a window.

Bottom line? Experts say that some medications can be effective for up to five years after the expiration date—if they are stored properly. But there’s no way to tell whether or not they are still 100 percent effective. To play it safe, discard medicine when it reaches its expiration date.

It’s important to keep track of your medications. A quick, convenient way to do this is to use free medication cards available at Avera St. Luke’s and at most local medical clinics. You can even print your own card at www.averastlukes.org. These medication cards were developed by Avera and can easily fit into a purse or wallet.

On the card, list valuable information such as your allergies, emergency contacts, health conditions, and more. List all the medications you take including prescription medicines, over-the-counter products, dietary supplements, herbal remedies, eye drops, and inhalers. Your completed card will be helpful at doctor appointments and especially during an emergency.

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Living Well

Sponsored by the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters

Ron L. Jacobson, President and CEO
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