



## **News Release**

1 June 2011

### **Leicester's Healthy Heart campaign is launched**

A new campaign is being launched in Leicester this weekend encouraging people to put on their walking shoes to help live longer, healthier, happier lives by reducing their risk of heart disease.

Leicester's Healthy Heart initiative is challenging people to try and walk as many minutes as possible this summer to improve their health and fitness, and help reduce their risk of heart disease.

By signing up to the campaign people can record all the minutes they have walked online and try to improve on their total each week. Team entries are also being encouraged, where people will be able to create or join a team to compete with friends and colleagues to walk the most minutes.

People will have the opportunity to join two walks this weekend as Leicester's Healthy Heart campaign is launched at Abbey Park in Leicester on Saturday (4 June). The first is Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport's Big Health Walk, with registration starting at 10am at the bandstand. The walk around the parkland will start at 10.30am and last for around 45 minutes, ending at the education centre.

The second walk at 11.30am from the education centre launches Leicester's Healthy Heart campaign and everyone is invited to join the City Mayor on this canalside walk, lasting 30-45 minutes, and ending at the Riverside Festival in Bede Park.

City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby said: "Heart problems are one of the biggest health issues in Leicester. Yet something as simple and every day as walking can do so much to restore the

feeling of fitness and wellbeing. I hope as many people as possible will join me on a pleasant walk along the canal to the Riverside Festival after we launch this campaign.”

Leicester’s Healthy Heart walking challenge runs until 2 September 2011, with prizes on offer to participating walkers and groups. People can register at any time by visiting [www.leicestershealthyheart.co.uk](http://www.leicestershealthyheart.co.uk) and those without internet access can also join the challenge by registering at their local Leicester library and posting details of their walking minutes using freepost forms.

Deb Watson, director of public health and health improvement at NHS Leicester City and Leicester City Council, added: “The time has never been better to reduce your risk of heart disease by making changes to your lifestyle.

“Walking is the perfect activity to improve your heart health because it can be done anywhere, it’s free and you don’t require any special equipment. It gives people a chance to get outside, make new friends and build up their levels of fitness at their own pace.”

Walking is one activity people can do as part of four simple steps to reduce the risk of heart disease:

- Give up smoking
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Increase physical activity
- Drink less alcohol

## **ENDS**

For more information please contact NHS Leicester City media officers Liz Thomas on 0116 295 4123 or Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663, or Leicester City Council media officer Rebecca Whitehead on 0116 252 6074.

Notes to editors:

Walkers who want to take part in the Big Health Walk at Abbey Park before the launch of Leicester’s Healthy Heart can register at the bandstand at 10am and be ready to start the walk at 10.30am.

Leicester’s Healthy Heart walk starts at 11.30am from the education centre in Abbey Park and will take walkers along the canalside, ending at the Riverside Festival in Bede Park.

The City Mayor will also launch Walkit.com in Leicester at Leicester's Healthy Heart launch on Saturday (4 June). Walkit.com is the only dedicated walking route planner for urban areas and has a mission to get people walking more in and around town. Users can choose between the most direct route or a less busy, less polluted route, and are given journey distances, times, step counts, hill profiles, calories burnt and carbon savings.

In Leicester in 2008/9 there were:

- **17,959** adults with diabetes
- **10,107** people with coronary heart disease
- **4,254** people on the stroke register

NHS Leicester City is the operating name for Leicester City NHS Primary Care Trust.