Laila Ali Hits Hard Against Heart Disease

February 24, 2017

Laila Ali may have hung up her boxing gloves 10 years ago, but she's still fighting. For nine years, she's taken on a deadly opponent that's hit close to home: cardiovascular disease, reports espnW.com.

For Ali, daughter of the late Muhammad Ali and a boxing champ in her own right, high blood pressure runs in her family. The condition, which affects 85 million Americans, is a risk factor for heart disease. "I have cousins, an aunt and grandmother that have all battled heart disease," Ali said. "So I'm here to encourage women to take control of their health."

Recently, Woman's Day magazine honored the former professional athlete, who retired undefeated with a record of 24-0, at the 14th annual Red Dress Awards for her work as an advocate for the American Heart Association.

"I've also spent a lot of time on my Laila Ali Lifestyle blog and podcast discussing the topic," Ali said. "This is a true passion of mine. This is who I really am. I've also spoken at some of the American Heart Association's Go Red events, and now they are honoring me at the Red Dress Awards, which is amazing."

Every year, Woman's Day honors those who have dedicated their lives to fighting heart disease, the leading cause of death for women in the United States.

"Educating our readers about heart health and giving them actionable tips to take control of their well-being is at the core of our health mission," said Susan Spencer, the magazine's editor-in-chief, in a press release.

Click here to read more about cardiovascular disease. And click here to read more about how Ali encourages everyone in her household to live heart healthy.

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