

NUTRITION NEWS

WRITTEN BY: SHANNON DAVIS, RD, CDN

LAYOUT BY: GINA PIZZO

Healthy Heart Month

February is the month when we start talking about cardiovascular health. Heart disease encompasses a range of health problems, from high blood pressure to heart attacks or congestive heart failure. It can even be as broad as to include high cholesterol. Clearly, there is a link between these conditions and diet!

Sodium and fat are often what we think of limiting first when we think about altering our diets to improve our cardiovascular health. Reducing your intake of saturated fats can be particularly helpful. But the addition of fiber can also be important. This why increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables is so important. Not only are they naturally low in both fat and sodium, but they are also high in fiber. Fiber can promote a feeling of satiety, as well as help to lower your cholesterol.

Increasing your physical activity can also help prevent cardiovascular disease. Adding exercise, as little as 30 minutes a day just three times a week can raise your HDL (or “good) cholesterol. This doesn’t have to involve hitting the gym for

hours each day. A simple vigorous walk or heavy duty cleaning can constitute exercise.

The single biggest risk factor in terms of contracting heart disease is smoking. Smoking by itself increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, but when it is combined with other risk factors, it greatly increases your risk. Even avoiding second hand smoke is critical. Each year, about 38,000 people die from heart and blood vessel disease caused by second hand smoke exposure. Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25-30%.

Women are particularly susceptible to heart disease. The following statistics (from the CDC -Center for Disease Control) is sobering.

- ◆ Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States– about one in four female deaths.

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MONTHLY EXERCISE

♥ LOVE HANDLES

Sit up straight in your chair. Inhale, and lengthen your spine. Exhale as you twist to the right, placing your left hand on your right knee. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, feeling the stretch. Repeat on the opposite side.

- ◆ Only 54% of women recognize that heart disease is their number one killer.
- ◆ Almost 2/3 (64%) of women who suddenly die of coronary heart disease have no previous symptoms.

While some women have no previous symptoms, others do and it is beneficial to know what these symptoms may be. Some experience angina (a dull, heavy to sharp pain or discomfort in the chest), pain in the neck/jaw/throat, or pain in the upper abdomen or back. These symptoms may occur at any time— at rest , during physical activity, or even during times of mental stress.

There are factors that put women at increased risk for heart disease. High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors. Other risk factors include the following:

- * Diabetes
- * Overweight status or obesity
- * Poor diet
- * Physical inactivity
- * Excessive alcohol use

There are many myths surrounding women and heart disease as well. Being aware of these misconceptions can lead to improved recognition of symptoms and early detection of the disease.

Myth #1: Heart disease is for men and cancer is the real threat for women: Heart disease strikes more women than men and is more deadly than all other forms of cancer combined. While one in 31 American women die from breast cancer each year, heart disease kills one in three.

Myth #2: Heart disease is for old people: Heart disease affects women of all ages. For younger women, smoking in combination with birth control pills increases the risk of heart disease by 20%. Risks do increase with age, but being born with an underlying heart condition can also be a factor at any age.

Myth #3: Heart disease doesn't affect women who are fit: factors like cholesterol, eating habits, and smoking can counteract your other healthy habits. The American Heart Association now recommends getting your cholesterol checked at age 20, earlier if you have a family history of heart disease. Blood pressure monitoring is also important.

Myth #4: I don't have any symptoms: as we already discussed, severe chest pain isn't necessarily the only sign of a heart attack. Women are more likely to experience such symptoms as shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain. They may also experience dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting, and extreme fatigue.

Instead of following a specific diet to reduce your risk of heart disease, here are some tips courtesy of the Mayo Clinic that can be easily inserted into your already established daily routine.

Control your portion size: controlling how much you eat is just as important as controlling what you eat. Use a small plate or bowl to help control your intake. Eat larger portions of low-calorie, nutrient dense foods, such as fruits and vegetables, and smaller portions of high calorie, high sodium foods (refined, processed, or fast foods.) Also keep track of the number of servings you eat. You can reference food labels to determine what an appropriate portion size is.

Eat more fruits and vegetables: Not only are they good sources of vitamins and minerals, but they are also low in calories and high in dietary fiber. They are also rich in phytochemicals and antioxidants. Keep fruits and veggies washed and cut in your fridge for a quick snack. Or keep fruit in a bowl on your table.

Select whole grains: Whole grains are good sources of fiber. If you are feeling adventurous, you can try a new whole grain, such as barley or quinoa. Using them in soups is an easy way to get started.

Limit unhealthy fats: Limiting saturated and trans fats can reduce your cholesterol and thereby reduce your risk of heart disease. It may also be beneficial to add healthy fats to your diet, such as omega-3 fatty acids.

Choose low fat protein sources: Lean meat, poultry and fish, and low fat dairy products are good source of protein. Eggs are also an excellent source. Not only is fish a good source of lean protein, it is also rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can lower your triglycerides. The highest amounts of omega-3 fatty acids are found in cold water fish, such as salmon, mackerel, and herring. You can also find omega-3's in flaxseed, walnuts, and canola oil. And don't forget about legumes. Beans, peas, and lentils are good protein sources.

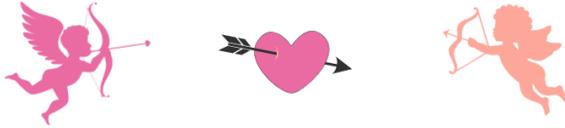
Reduce the sodium in your food: Aim to consume no more than 2300 mg of sodium daily. Be aware of the extra sodium that is found in processed and convenience foods. Canned vegetables contain considerable more sodium in them than frozen vegetables. If you use canned soups, shop for the low sodium version. You'll be surprised at how little you miss the additional sodium.

Plan ahead— create daily menus: Even weekly menus will help you plan and shop and will also keep you on track instead of opting for a quick fast food meal during the week when you don't have anything else planned for dinner.

Allow occasional treats: Any food can fit into a moderate diet. Allowing certain indulgences can keep you on track for the long haul. Depriving yourself will only make it difficult to adopt a new lifestyle. A well balanced diet does not forbid any foods and allows moderation in all categories.



What is your cupid name?



COMBINE THE FIRST LETTER OF YOUR NAME...

- | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| A: Lovey | G: Silly | M: Dreamy | S: Goofy | Y: Princess |
| B: Starry-Eyed | H: Cheerful | N: Happy | T: Quirky | Z: Bubbly |
| C: Coy | I: Beauty | O: Bashful | U: Hearty | |
| D: Flirty | J: Sassy | P: Wild | V: Honey | |
| E: Sappy | K: Cheeky | Q: Kissy | W: Pookie | |
| F: Cutie | L: Posh | R: Darling | X: Sweetie | |

...WITH THE MONTH OF YOUR BIRTH

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| January: Love-Bug | July: Heart-Throb |
| February: Cutie-Pie | August: Hot-Stuff |
| March: Angel-Wings | September: Baby-Cakes |
| April: Cuddle-Bunny | October: Red-Passion |
| May: Sugar-Lips | November: Heart-Breaker |
| June: Eye-Candy | December: Sexy-Babe |

HEAP

The income guidelines for 2024 are as follows:

Household of 1: \$3,035

Household of 2: \$3,970

Household of 3: \$4,904

HEAP also offers the Clean and Tune Program and Furnace Repair and Replacement Program

HERKIMER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING

109 Mary St., Herkimer, NY 13350

Phone: 315-867-1121

Fax: 315-867-1448

Email: hcofa@herkimercounty.org

Web: www.herkimercounty.org; then 'departments' then 'Office for the Aging'

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Here are some heart healthy recipes that use fairly common ingredients to get you thinking of new ideas!

Zippy Range Rosemary Chicken

4 boneless skinless chicken breasts

1/2 cup orange marmalade

1 tbs prepared horseradish

1 tbs dried rosemary

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray a 8 x 8 inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.

Season chicken breasts with salt and pepper; place in prepared dish. Combine marmalade, horseradish, and rosemary in a small bowl

Pour over chicken. Bake in preheated oven for 30-35 minutes or until the juices run clear.

Cranberry Rice

2/3 cup uncooked brown rice

1 1/2 cup water

2 tbs canned jellied cranberry sauce

1/2 cup dried cranberries

1/4 cup chopped toasted pecans

Bring the brown rice and water to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until the rice is tender and almost all the liquid has been absorbed, 45-50 minutes. Mash the cranberry sauce in a small bowl with a fork until almost smooth, and stir the sauce into the brown rice, mixing well to tint the rice a slight pink color. Cover, and let steam for about 5 minutes.

Place the dried cranberries in a microwave safe bowl, and cook on high setting in a microwave just until hot, about 30 seconds. Stir the cranberries into the rice. Season to taste with salt and black pepper; serve sprinkled with pecans.