

# NUTRITION NEWS

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## Healthy Heart Month

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February is Heart Month. This month is dedicated to cardiac health awareness and encompasses many health conditions, including heart attacks, strokes, and high blood pressure (hypertension).

The 2024 update from the American Heart Association reveals the following:

- ◆ Heart disease and stroke claimed more lives in 2021 in the US than all forms of cancer and chronic lower respiratory diseases combined
- ◆ Between 2017 and 2020, 48.6% of US adults had some form of cardiovascular disease.
- ◆ Cardiovascular disease accounted for approximately 19.91 million global deaths in 2021.

The good news is that there are strategies that can prevent heart disease. According to the Mayo Clinic, although you cannot change certain risk factors (such as family history, sex, or age), there are number of other ways to reduce your risk.

1. Don't smoke or use tobacco – this is one of the best things you can do for your heart. It is also important to limit your exposure to second hand smoke, even if you don't smoke.
2. Get moving– aim for at least 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
3. Eat a heart healthy diet– increasing your intake of fruits, vegetables, and fiber and decreasing your sodium and fat intake are important.
4. Maintain a healthy weight– keep in mind that carrying excess weight around the middle further increases your chance of developing heart disease.
5. Get good quality sleep– adults need at least 7 hours of sleep each night.
6. Manage stress– try relaxation exercises or meditation.



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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.

As states on the previous page, diet and intake can impact your blood pressure, and thereby can affect your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Being conscious of your overall intake, and especially your sodium intake, can improve your blood pressure. The DASH diet is a specific dietary plan that many physicians still endorse as a way to help bring your hypertension under control

DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) focuses on including foods that are low in sodium. It also incorporates foods that are rich in potassium, magnesium, and calcium as these nutrients are also believed to play a role in maintaining a healthy blood pressure. The DASH diet features foods such as vegetable, fruits, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, fish, poultry, and nuts. It also recommends limiting your sweets and sugary beverages. It is not surprising that this diet is similar to the general recommendations put forth to reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer.

You can slowly incorporate the DASH diet into your current dietary habits. Here are some tips to making a gradual, but hopefully lasting, change.

- Add a vegetable or fruit serving at lunch and dinner.
- Use only half the butter you are using now.
- Get added nutrients such as the B vitamins by choosing whole grain foods, including whole wheat bread or whole grain cereals.

- Spread out the servings: have two servings of fruits or vegetables at each meal or add fruits as snacks.
- Treat meat as one part of the meal, instead of the focus. Try casseroles, pastas, and stir-fry dishes. Try to have two meatless meals per week.
- Use fruits or low fat foods such as yogurt as desserts or snacks.

If you are trying to lose weight as well, keep these calorie saving tips in mind.

- \* Use low fat condiments, such as low fat salad dressings.
- \* Eat smaller portions— cut back gradually.
- \* Choose low fat or fat free dairy products to reduce your total fat intake.
- \* Limit foods with lots of added sugars, such as pies, flavored yogurts, candy bars, ice cream, sherbet, regular soft drinks, and fruit drinks.
- \* Eat fruits canned in their own juice, as opposed to those canned in heavy syrups.
- \* Snack on fruit, vegetable sticks, unbuttered or unsalted popcorn, or bread sticks.
- \* Drink water or seltzer,

Even simple changes, such as reducing your overall intake (without actually changing the type of foods you're eating) can significantly reduce your blood pressure. Don't forget the importance of portion size!



Knowing the signs and symptoms of a stroke can help expedite treatment, which may significantly improve your outcome. The acronym **F.A.S.T.** is an easy way to remember the symptoms.

-Face drooping: Does one side of the face droop or is numb? Asking the person to smile can help clarify this.

-Arm weakness: Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

-Speech difficulty: Is the speech slurred, are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is the sentence repeated correctly/

-Time to call 911: If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 and get the person to the hospital immediately.

Other symptoms include sudden numbness or weakness of the leg, sudden confusion or trouble understanding, sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes, sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, and sudden severe headache with no known cause.

It is also important to note that a TIA (also known as a “warning stroke”) produces similar symptoms. However, these symptoms usually go away after only a few minutes. You should still bring the individual to the hospital, as individuals who experience a TIA have a high risk of stroke.



Brain health can also encompass your mental health and well being. This can be a difficult time of year for many of us. The upstate New York weather can be isolating and at times winter seems to last forever! But when possible, remember that socialization can help. Maybe you can try meeting friends at one of our congregate dining sites. Not only will you receive a tasty, nutritious meal, but you will also gain the opportunity for regular contact with others who may be in a similar social situation. Regular physical activity and getting adequate sleep can also improve your mental health.

You could also consider volunteering. It also promote mental health and may help prevent dementia. Studies have shown that participating in meaningful activities, such as volunteering, can improve longevity, mental health, and reduce your risk of developing dementia. We even have volunteer opportunities at the Office for the Aging!

Diet can play a role in depression. Remember to take in adequate B vitamins, as well as Vitamin C and Vitamin D. Low intakes of minerals including calcium iron, and magnesium may also contribute to depression. If it is difficult to meet your needs, especially during the winter months, try supplementing your diet with a general daily multivitamin.

Find a reason  
To smile  
every day!!!!

**Healthy Habits  
For you Brain**

Challenge your mind

Be curious. Put your brain to work and do something that is new or hard for you. Learn a new skill. Try some thing artistic. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.

**HEAP**

The income guidelines for 2024-2025 are as follows

Household of 1: \$3,322

Household of 2: \$4,345

Household of 3: \$5,367

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

**Please call the HEAP Office**

**315-867-1195**



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Web: [www.herkimercountyny.gov](http://www.herkimercountyny.gov)**

February 4 is National Homemade Soup day!  
Here is a healthy, delicious recipe to try!

**Italian Red Lentil and Brown Rice Soup**

- 2 tbs olive oil**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 4 cups vegetable broth**
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can Italian style diced tomatoes**
- 1 1/4 cups red lentils, rinsed and drained**
- 1/2 cup uncooked brown rice**
- 1 tbs Italian seasoning**
- 1 tbs dried celery flakes**
- 1 tsp ground white pepper**
- 1 tsp dried marjoram**
- 1 1/2 tbs balsamic vinegar**

Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; cook and stir until softened , about 5 minutes. Stir in broth, diced tomatoes, red lentils, brown rice, Italian seasoning, celery flakes, white pepper, and marjoram. Bring soup to a boil; reduce heat, cover, and simmer until lentils break down and rice is tender, about 55 minutes.

Stir balsamic vinegar into the soup just before serving. Top with parmesan cheese. Serve with this quick bread for a tasty meal!

**Spicy Cheese Quick Bread**

- 1 3/4 cup flour**
- 2 1/2 tsp baking powder**
- 3/4 tsp salt**
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper**
- 1 tsp garlic powder**
- 1/2 tsp onion powder**
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning**
- 1 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese**
- 1/2 cup half and half**
- 1/2 cup milk**
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil**

Preheat oven to 400. Lightly grease a 9x5 inch loaf pan. Mix dry ingredients and cheese; whisk in wet ingredients. Pour into prepared pan and bake 35-40 minutes.