



# In Good Health Newsletter, February

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- Mediterranean Chopped Salad



Keep a  
Healthy  
Heart!

## 5 Things to do Daily For Your Heart

- 1. Eat Healthy Fats, Not Trans Fat.** We need fats in our diet, including saturated and polyunsaturated and unsaturated fats. One fat we don't need is trans fat, which is known to increase your risk of developing heart disease or having a stroke over a lifetime. This is because trans fat clogs your arteries by raising your bad cholesterol levels (LDL) and lowering your good cholesterol levels (HDL). By cutting them from your diet, you improve the blood flow throughout your body. So, what are trans fats? They are industry-produced fats often used in packaged baked goods, snack foods, margarines and fried fast foods to add flavor and texture. Trans fat appears on the ingredients list as partially hydrogenated oils. Look for 0 percent trans fat.
- 2. Don't Sit For Too Long at One Time.** In recent years, research has suggested that staying seated for long periods of time is bad for your health no matter how much exercise you do. In addition, sitting for long periods of time (especially when traveling) increases your risk of deep vein thrombosis (a blood clot). Experts say it's important to move throughout the day. Park farther away from the office, take a few shorter walks throughout the day and/or use a standing work station so you can move up and down.
- 3. Practice Good Dental Hygiene, Especially Flossing Your Teeth Daily.** Dental health is a good indication of overall health, including your heart, because those who have periodontal (gum) disease often have the same risk factors for heart disease. Studies continue on this issue, but many have shown that bacteria in the mouth involved in the development of gum disease can move into the bloodstream and cause an elevation in C-reactive protein, a marker for inflammation in the blood vessels. These changes may in turn, increase your risk of heart disease and stroke. Floss and brush your teeth daily to ward off gum disease.

## 5 Things to do Daily For Your Heart

**4. Get Enough Sleep.** Sleep is an essential part of keeping your heart healthy. If you don't sleep enough, you may be at a higher risk for cardiovascular disease no matter your age or other health habits. One study looking at 3,000 adults over the age of 45 found that those who slept fewer than six hours per night were about twice as likely to have a stroke or heart attack as people who slept six to eight hours per night. Make sleep a priority. Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep most nights. If you have sleep apnea, you should be treated as this condition is linked to heart disease and arrhythmias.

**5. Avoid Secondhand Smoke.** Studies show that the risk of developing heart disease is about 25 to 30 percent higher for people who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work. According to the American Heart Association, exposure to tobacco smoke contributes to about 34,000 premature heart disease deaths and 7,300 lung cancer deaths each year. And nonsmokers who have high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol have an even greater risk of developing heart disease when they're exposed to secondhand smoke.



### Manage Controllable Risk Factors For a Healthy Heart

#### Eat a Diet That is Low in Saturated Fat, Sodium, and Cholesterol

Take the time to read food labels, which will help you understand what foods you should avoid or eat in small quantities. In prepared foods, avoid products made with trans fats and hydrogenated vegetable oils. One great way to reduce your [cholesterol](#) is to increase your fiber intake with more fruits, vegetables, beans and whole-grain foods. Try to consume 25 grams to 35 grams of fiber each day. [Sodium](#) is found in many foods like processed meats, eggs and bread. Make a conscious effort to consume only 2 grams or less — that's one-half teaspoon — of sodium per day.

#### Do 30 Minutes of Daily Exercise That Increases Your Heart Rate

Make [exercise](#) a part of your daily routine. Find an activity that fits your lifestyle and take the time to do it. The good news is that the 30 minutes does not have to be consecutive. You can do three 10-minute spurts (or two 15-minute spurts) of activity that get your heart rate up. For example, you might do short and brisk walks two to three times a day.

#### If You Smoke, Stop!

[Smoking](#) is a major risk factor for heart disease. Smokers have about a 70 percent higher death rate from coronary artery disease than do nonsmokers. Amazing fact: When you quit, your heart will begin to rejuvenate and repair itself.

## Manage Controllable Risk Factors

### Keep Your Blood Pressure and Cholesterol at Normal Levels

A good blood pressure is around 120/80 mm Hg, and an ideal cholesterol level depends on your other risk factors. But in general the following are established goals:

- Total Cholesterol: Less than 200mg/dl
- LDL: Less than 100mg/dl
- HDL: Above 40mg/dl for men
  - Above 50mg/dl for women

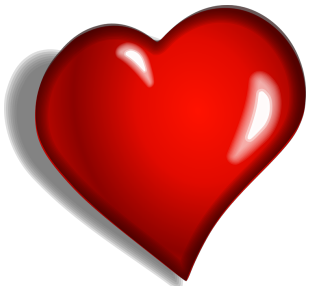
To keep these numbers in check, be sure to have these indicators measured regularly and take the medications that your doctor prescribes.

### Keep Your Stress Levels in Check

To keep your ticker healthy, it's important to assess your [stress level](#) every so often. Don't ignore it when you're feeling stressed for more than a day. There are many ways to reduce stress. You can listen to music, take a walk with a friend or family member or meditate. Whatever you do, find what works for you. Another way to keep stress in check for the long-term is to have a good network of friends with whom you can talk. Finally, be sure to separate your family time from work time. This can do wonders.



## Tips For a Stronger Heart



## A Strong Heart = A Healthy Heart

### Best Activities For Strengthening Your Heart

- **Interval Training:** Alternating short bursts of higher intensity exercise with low intensity recovery period. Ex, walking, running, biking, rowing, treadmill, weights
- **Strength Training:** Aim for a total body strength routine using your bodyweight, [resistance bands](#), free-weights or any combination of the three.
- **Avoid Long Periods of Sitting:** Recent studies clearly show that even the fittest of people are negatively affected by sitting for long periods of time. You need to move all day long, even in non-exercise activities. Set a timer to go off every 10-15 minutes as a reminder to get up and move around for a minute or two.
- **Focus on Your Core:** The core muscles (consisting of approximately 25+ muscles throughout your back, abdomen and pelvis) provide the foundation for movement throughout the entire body. Keeping them strong and functioning properly will allow you to move the way your body was meant to and prevent debilitating back injuries that could prevent you from being able to exercise.
- **Flexibility/ Mobility:** Keeping the muscles and joints of the body flexible and mobile will help prevent injuries and aid in the body's ability to move and function properly.

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# **Foods to Strengthen Your Heart!**

**Heart Disease accounts for nearly one - third of all deaths worldwide. Diet plays a major role in heart health and can impact your risk of heart disease. In fact, certain foods can influence blood pressure, triglycerides, cholesterol levels and inflammation, all of which are risk factors for heart disease.**

## **Leafy Green Vegetables**

High in vitamin K and nitrates, which can help reduce blood pressure and improve arterial function.

## **Whole Grains**

Studies show that eating whole grains is associated with lower cholesterol and systolic blood pressure, as well as a lower risk of heart disease.

## **Berries**

Berries are rich in antioxidants. Studies show that eating them can reduce multiple risk factors for heart disease.

## **Avocados**

Avocados are high in monounsaturated fats and potassium. They may help lower your cholesterol, blood pressure and risk of metabolic syndrome.

## **Fatty Fish & Fish Oil**

Fatty fish include salmon, mackerel, sardines and tuna. Fatty fish and fish oil are both high in omega-3 fatty acids and may help reduce heart disease risk factors, including blood pressure, triglycerides and cholesterol.

## **Walnuts**

Studies suggest that walnuts can help reduce cholesterol and blood pressure and may be associated with a lower risk of heart disease.

## **Beans**

Beans are high in resistant starch and have been shown to reduce levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, lower blood pressure and decrease inflammation.

## **Dark Chocolate**

Dark chocolate is high in antioxidants like flavonoids. It has been associated with a lower risk of developing calcified plaque in the arteries and coronary heart disease.

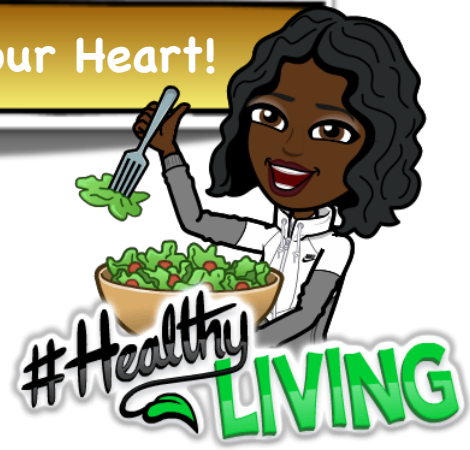
## **Tomatoes**

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene and have been associated with a lower risk of heart disease and stroke, as well as an increase in "good" HDL cholesterol.

## **Almonds**

Almonds are high in fiber and monounsaturated fats, and have been linked to reductions in cholesterol and belly fat.

# Foods to Strengthen Your Heart!



## Seeds

Human and animal studies have found that eating seeds may improve several heart disease risk factors, including inflammation, blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides.

## Olive Oil

Olive oil is high in antioxidants and monounsaturated fats. It has been associated with lower blood pressure and heart disease risk.

## Green Tea

Green Tea has polyphenols and catechins, which can act as antioxidants to prevent cell damage, reduce inflammation and protect the health of your heart. It has been associated with lower cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure.

## Garlic

Garlic and its components have been shown to help reduce blood pressure and cholesterol. They may also help inhibit blood clot formation.

## Edamame

**Edamame** is an immature soybean frequently found in Asian cuisine. Edamame contains soy isoflavones, which have been shown to help decrease cholesterol levels. Edamame also contains fiber and antioxidants, which can also benefit heart health.

## The Bottom Line

What you put on your plate can influence just about every aspect of heart health, from blood pressure and inflammation to cholesterol levels and triglycerides. Including these heart-healthy foods as part of a nutritious, well-balanced diet can help keep your heart in good shape and minimize your risk of heart disease.



# Brownie Batter Protein Shake

This shake tastes just as good as dessert, but doubles as a smart post-workout snack, loaded with protein and delicious flavor. A banana base thickens the texture, while a hint of coffee intensifies the rich chocolatey goodness. Next time you're craving a brownie, make this protein shake for a healthy, vegan alternative!



## Ingredients:

- 1 large banana, frozen
- 1/4 cup of coffee, brewed
- 3/4 cup non dairy milk
- 1 scoop chocolate protein powder
- 2 tablespoon cocoa powder
- Splash of vanilla
- Scant salt
- 1 teaspoon of dairy free chocolate chips, optional

**Preparation:** Place all ingredients in a blender or Magic Bullet and mix until smooth.

## Per 12 ounce serving:

- 255 calories
- 5 grams fat ( 2.6 grams saturated fat)
- 44 grams carbohydrates
- 500 mg sodium
- 10 grams fiber
- 19 grams sugar
- 16 grams protein

[verywellfit.com](http://verywellfit.com)