



Celebrate American Heart Month

February

Do you know your : resting heart rate ... cholesterol levels ... fasting blood sugar ... triglyceride levels ... family health history ...

February is American Heart Month

Heart disease is the #1 cause of death in the United States. The object of this month is to increase the public's knowledge of various cardiovascular diseases in order to boost research fund-raising and to encourage heart-healthy habits.

The American Heart Association's goal has remained the same since 1948 – to reduce cardiovascular disease by 25% by the following: decrease the growing obesity trend, reduce untreated high blood pressure, and to encourage people to start exercising, stop smoking, and take the steps necessary to reduce their cholesterol.

American Heart Month is intended to bring awareness to people who may not think about heart-related illness and to decrease the future number of people who may have a heart-related illness.

Heart disease isn't just found in men. In fact, it's the third-leading cause of death for women 25 to 44, the second-leading cause of death for women 45 to 64, and it is the first leading cause of death for American women greater than 65 years old. Men and women share some common risk factors such as increasing age, heredity (family history), tobacco smoke, high blood cholesterol and blood pressure, physical inactivity, obesity, and diabetes mellitus. However, there are some risk factors that play a bigger role in the development of heart disease in women than in men to women. Are you at risk?

- metabolic syndrome: a combinations of high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high triglycerides, and fat around your abdomen
- mental stress and depression
- smoking
- low levels of estrogen post-menopause increases the chance of developing CVD in the smaller blood vessels

Simple lifestyle changes may reduce your risk of heart disease:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Quit or do not start smoking
- Exercise 30-60 minutes a day on most days of the week
- Eat a diet low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and salt

For more information visit americanheart.org

For an online heart assessment, visit http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartAttack/HeartAttackToolsResources/Heart-Attack-Risk-Assessment_UCM_303944_Article.jsp



a little DASH will do

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, or DASH diet eating plan, is recommended by physicians for people with hypertension (high blood pressure) or prehypertension. In studies supported by the National Institute of Health, the DASH diet has been proven to lower blood pressure in just 14 days. In addition to being a low-sodium eating plan, the DASH diet is a plan rich in fruits and vegetables and low- or non-fat dairy, and limited amounts of fats and sugars.

The DASH eating plan is targeted to suit not just the individual, but also the entire family. New research is showing that there are additional benefits of the DASH eating plan other than lowering blood pressure, including reducing the risk of stroke, heart disease, and kidney stones.

A natural combination of calcium, potassium, and magnesium (found in foods included in the DASH diet) has shown to have the best effect in lowering blood pressure.

Calcium: low-fat dairy products

Potassium: bananas, dates, potatoes, apricots, and tomatoes

Magnesium: whole grains, nuts, legumes, and beans

Bottom Line: Simply adding more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to your current diet will make your sodium levels drop.

For more info about the DASH eating plan, visit dashdiet.org

Recipe of the Month

Mashed Potatoes with Cumin-Lime Butter

Potatoes and milk are both delicious sources of potassium; there are about 695 mg of potassium per serving

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallots
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 4 teaspoons fresh lime juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cumin seeds, toasted
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 1/2 pounds Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 3/4 cup low-fat buttermilk
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

Combine first 6 ingredients in a small bowl. Mash with a fork until blended. Cover and refrigerate.

Place potatoes in a large saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes or until tender; drain. Return potatoes to pan. Add buttermilk, salt, and pepper; beat with a mixer at medium speed until smooth. Serve with butter mixture.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 3/4 cup potatoes and 1 tsp butter mixture)

Courtesy of CookingLight Magazine



Move of the Month

Seated Spiral Stretch

This stretch increases flexibility in the spine and stretches the hips, glutes and the lower back.



Sit tall and keep the right leg straight as you cross the left foot over the right.

The left foot should be resting next to the right knee.

Gently twist to the left, taking the right arm across the body to the outside of the left knee.

Use the arm to gently twist into the stretch, only going as far as your flexibility allows.

You should feel the stretch in the outside of the left hip.

Hold for 15-30 seconds and repeat for 1-3 sets on each side.

<http://exercise.about.com/od/yogapilatesflexibility/ss/Stretching-And-Flexibility-Exercises.htm>