

HEART HEALTH

February is American Heart Month

Celebrate your heart by trying out some of these heart healthy tips and recipes! What's inside: heart healthy tips, heart healthy recipes, vitamin D 101, tips for saving on produce, how much fruits and vegetables you need, and indoor exercising tips.

Heart Healthy Tips:

Choose Foods Low in Saturated Fat

- Saturated fats are found in animal products and tropical oils.
- Saturated fat is solid at room temperature.
- Limit: red meat, butter, cream, cheese, coconut oil, and palm oil.
- Eat: lean meats, fish, low-fat or non-fat dairy and dairy products, skinless chicken, olive oil, nuts, and legumes.

Focus on Decreasing Sodium

- 1,500 mg of sodium a day is the ideal limit.
- Sodium can be found in foods you would not expect, so it is important to read nutrition labels.
- Check out your condiments, often these are very high in sodium and should be limited or try low sodium options.
- Buy low-sodium frozen meals and eat these when you don't feel like cooking rather than eating out.

Go for the Good Carbohydrates

- Whole grains not only provide fiber, they also contain B vitamins.
- Eat 20-30 grams of fiber each day.
- Aim for 4-5 cups of fruits and vegetables daily.



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Herbed Veggie Skillet

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp. canola or corn oil
- 8 oz. zucchini
- 1/4 cup sliced onion
- 1/4 cup diced green bell pepper
- 3/4 cup frozen whole kernel corn
- 1/3 cup diced tomato
- 2 Tbsp. water (plus more if needed)
- 1/8 tsp. dried basil
- 1/8 dried marjoram
- 1/8 dried oregano
- pepper to taste

Directions:

In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the zucchini, onion, and bell pepper for 3 minutes, or until the onion is soft, stirring frequently.

Stir in the remaining ingredients except the pepper. Cook, covered, for 5 minutes, or until the zucchini is tender, adding more water if necessary. Sprinkle with the pepper.

Serves 4

Nutrition Facts - Per Serving

Calories	69
Saturated Fat	0.0 g
Sodium	9 mg

Fruit Salad with Lemon-Mint Yogurt Dressing

Ingredients:

Dressing:

- 1/2 cup fat-free vanilla yogurt
- 1 Tbsp. chopped, fresh mint
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1/2 tsp. grated lemon zest
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

Salad:

- 1/2 cup cantaloupe balls
- 1/2 cup blackberries
- 1/2 cup raspberries
- 4 sprig fresh mint (optional)
- 1/2 cup fresh or canned pineapple chunks, drained

Directions:

In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients.

In a medium bowl, gently stir together the salad ingredients except the mint, being careful to not crush the berries. Spoon onto small plates. Drizzle with the dressing. Garnish with the mint sprigs.

Serves 4

Nutrition Facts - Per Serving

Calories	66
Saturated Fat	0.0 g
Sodium	26 mg

*Recipes from: <https://recipes.heart.org/>

Spring Greens with Salmon and Apricot-Ginger Vinaigrette

Ingredients:

Apricot-Ginger Vinaigrette:

1/4 cup all-fruit apricot spread
1/4 cup fresh orange juice
2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
1 tsp. sugar
2 tsp. fresh, grated, peeled ginger root
1/8 tsp. red pepper flakes
1/8 tsp. salt

Salad:

4 cups mixed salad greens (spring mix preferred), torn into pieces
2 cup baby spinach
1 cup shredded cabbage
1 cup fresh or frozen (thawed) snow peas, trimmed and halved diagonally
7 oz. cooked pink salmon

Directions:

In a food processor or blender, process the vinaigrette ingredients; apricot spread, orange juice, vinegar, sugar, ginger root, red pepper flakes and salt until smooth.

Put the remaining salad ingredients except the salmon on a serving platter. Pour the dressing over the salad. Toss gently. Crumble the salmon on top. Serve immediately for peak flavors and texture.

Serves 4

Nutrition Facts - Per Serving

Calories	128
Saturated Fat	1.0 g
Sodium	366 mg

VITAMIN D 101

How Does Vitamin D Relate to Heart Health?

Those who are Vitamin D deficient are at a greater risk of high blood pressure.

In several studies, it has been found that individuals with high blood pressure who were also Vitamin D deficient had a decrease in their blood pressure after Vitamin D supplementation.

Other Facts about Vitamin D:

Approximately 40% of all Americans are Vitamin D deficient.

Vitamin D deficiency is not only associated with hypertension but also with increased risk of common cancers, autoimmune diseases, and infectious diseases.

Vitamin D works with calcium to keep bones strong.

Sufficient Vitamin D is needed to prevent diseases such as rickets, osteomalacia, and osteoporosis.

Current Recommended Dietary Allowance for Vitamin D:

Infants	400 IU*
Children and Adults <70	600 IU
Adults >70	800 IU

*IU= International Units, 1 IU = 0.025 micrograms

Vitamin D from The Sun:

- Direct exposure to sunlight allows the UV light from the sun to combine with cholesterol in your skin and Vitamin D is created.
- Sunlight exposure to the hands, face, and arms for 10-30 minutes, 2-3 times per week produces sufficient Vitamin D.

Barriers to Sunlight Absorption:

- Darker skin tone.
- Clothing covering the skin.
- Windows blocking sunlight.
- Use of sunscreen.
- Time of day and where the sun is in the sky.
- Cloudy weather.
- Geographic location, the further you are from the equator the longer the winters are.

Types of Vitamin D

There are 2 dietary supplement sources of Vitamin D:

- Ergosterol from plant fats which is converted to Ergocalciferol (Vitamin D2) in the body.
- 7-dehydrocholesterol from animal fats which is converted to Cholecalciferol (Vitamin D3) in the body.

Vitamin D2 needs to undergo more processing in the body to be in the active form than Vitamin D3.

Vitamin D3 is easier for our bodies to absorb.

Because of this Vitamin D3 is a better choice when supplementing Vitamin D.

Vitamin D Food Sources:

Cod liver oil (1 Tbsp.)	1360 IU
Salmon, cooked (3 oz.)	794 IU
Multivitamins	400+ IU
Mackerel, Cooked (3 oz.)	388 IU
Canned Tuna Fish (3 oz.)	154 IU
Fortified Milk (1 cup)	115-124 IU
Fortified Orange Juice (1 cup)	100 IU
Fortified Yogurt (6 oz.)	80 IU
Fortified Cereal (.75-1 cup)	40 IU
Egg Yolk (1 ea.)	25 IU



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

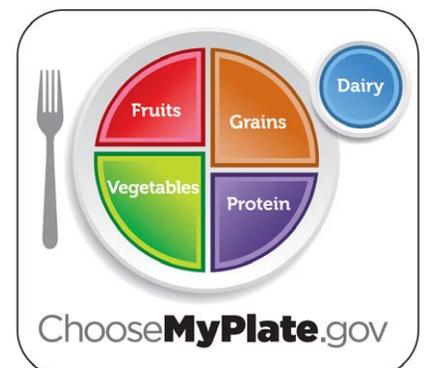


Fruit and Vegetable Shopping Tips for Savings

- Buy produce that is in season.
- Look for sales and coupons to lower prices.
- Plan meals ahead of time and make a list.
- Don't shop while hungry.
- Save with canned or frozen produce, don't forget to buy "low-sodium" or "no salt added".
- If you can't eat produce quick enough buy small amounts frequently so that you don't throw any away.
- Buy in bulk for a better deal.
- Get store brands and save.
- Buy produce in its whole form, pre-cut or ready-to-eat products are more expensive.
- Grow your own. Start a garden during the spring or grow herbs near a window.
- Cook large batches of vegetable soups and other dishes then portion into freezer bags and freeze for later use.

Know How Much Fruit and Vegetables You Need

- On average adults need 1½ to 2 cups of fruit and 2 to 3 cups of vegetables daily.
- Examples of a 1 cup serving:
 - 1 large orange
 - 1 large ear of corn
 - 1 large sweet potato
- Examples of a ½ cup serving:
 - 16 grapes
 - 4 large strawberries
 - 6 baby carrots



SAMPLE INDOOR EXERCISES



- Dance to some music.
- Do at home strength exercises with heavy items like cans or water bottles so you don't have to buy equipment like dumbbells.
- Check out your local mall when the weather is bad. Most malls open early for morning walkers.
- Do stretches. Look online for some examples.
- Follow along with a T.V. fitness program.
- Visit your local library and check out their exercise video selection.
- Go to a gym or recreation center.
- Get involved with activities at local community centers.
- Take a swim at an indoor pool.
- Take a water aerobics class.
- Look for sales or buy used exercise equipment.
- Try an indoor sport such as racquetball, tennis, roller-skating, bowling, etc.



References:

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4. [Vacek, James L., MD MS, Subba Reddy Vanga, MBBS, and Sue Min Lai, PhD. "Vitamin D Deficiency and Supplementation and Relation to Cardiovascular Health." The American Journal of Cardiology 109.3 \(2012\): 359-63. Web.](#)
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