

Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter

February 2018



Healthy Heart Tips for American Heart Month

This month is American Heart Month. This is a great opportunity to learn about healthy lifestyle habits for a healthy heart. Heart disease and conditions can often be prevented or managed by using these heart health tips:

Exercise—Regular cardiovascular exercise helps to keep your heart strong and healthy. The American Heart Association suggest 150 minutes of exercise per week. Include strength training at least 2-3 times per week.

Eat nutritious foods—Foods rich in minerals, plant proteins, fish/seafood, nuts, and whole grains can help you control your weight, cholesterol and blood pressure. Limit saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, red meat, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages.

Get enough sleep—Studies show that you may be at a higher risk for cardiovascular disease if you don't get an adequate amount of sleep. Researchers believe sleeping too little causes disruptions in underlying health conditions and biological processes, including blood pressure and inflammation.

Manage your stress—Your body reacts to stress by increasing blood pressure, heart rate and muscle tension which over time can affect your health. Using techniques to relax or exercises, such as yoga to focus on breathing, help to prevent these reactions.



No matter your age, making smart choices now will support a lifetime of health. Talk to your doctor about your family history, the warning signs of a heart attack or stroke and preventative methods you can learn to be healthy from the inside out.

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Break and Bake Kitchen Sink Cookies

Ingredients:

Nonstick cooking spray
2 cups all-purpose flour
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
1½ teaspoons baking soda
1½ cups packed light brown sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
¾ cup granulated sugar
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
2 large eggs
2 large egg yolks
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
2 cups mix-ins (such as chopped chocolate, chopped dates, toasted nuts, toasted coconut, etc.)

Line a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with parchment paper; coat with nonstick cooking spray.

Whisk flour, salt, and baking soda in a medium bowl. Whisk brown sugar, oil, granulated sugar, and melted butter in a large bowl until combined. Add eggs, egg yolks, and vanilla; whisk until smooth. Stir in flour mixture just until combined. Stir in oats and mix-ins.

Press dough into prepared dish. Cut into quarters (cutting all the way through to parchment), then make shallow cuts, creating 12 squares in each quadrant (do not cut all the way through).

Cover dish with plastic wrap and freeze until dough is solid, about 1 hour. Unwrap, separate dough quadrants, and place in 4 freezer bags. Stack bags in freezer until ready to use.

To bake, heat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Break dough along scored cuts; place on sheet 2 inches apart. Bake, rotating halfway through, until edges are set and golden but centers are soft, 12 to 14 minutes (cookies will crisp as they cool). Let cool on wire racks.

The Importance of Setting Realistic Fitness Goals

If you aim to stay in shape, regularly following your current exercise program may suffice. But if you want to see changes in your body or overall fitness, realistic goal-setting can make a big difference. What is realistic for you depends on your starting point. If you're already active, you can push yourself harder by aiming to swim, run -- or whatever you like to do -- farther and faster. If you're starting from a sedentary lifestyle, you'll need to go more slowly. The key is to be sensible and not aim so high that you wind up on the couch with snack foods and a defeated attitude.

Deciding on a Goal

First, figure out what you're trying to accomplish. Maybe you want to run your first 5K, or perhaps you're a seasoned runner who wants to set a new personal best on a half marathon. Losing weight and gaining muscle are classic fitness goals. Or maybe you just want to climb a flight of stairs without huffing and puffing. Older people might want to work on balance to decrease their risk of falling. Once you choose a goal, write it down.

SMART Method

Avoid goals that are too vague. Without a definite goal, you might get confused about whether you're making any progress. This can lead to discouragement and abandoning the exercise program. The American Council on Exercise recommends using the acronym SMART to set an effective goal. SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. For example, you might want to take 30 seconds off your 5K time for a race you're running three months from now. The "T" for time-bound can be especially motivational and help you maintain your focus on your goal.

Process vs. Product

Some goals focus on the process, others on the product. You might want to set one or two of each. Process-oriented goals include walking 2 miles three days per week or attending yoga class every Tuesday. Product goals involve achieving something, such as improving your score on a fitness test, increasing the amount of weight on your bench press or losing an inch off your thighs.

Goal-Setting Tips

Breaking your goal into smaller goals can help you adhere to the program. For example, say you're a walker who wants to start running. You'd like to be able to jog 2 miles nonstop by May. In February, work on alternating walking with jogging every 1/4 mile for the 2-mile total. In March, pump it up to alternating 1/2 miles of walking and running, and in April, walk a mile and then jog a mile. Many people are motivated by having a workout partner, so if you're a sociable exerciser, invite a friend for a bike ride or attend a group exercise class. Make your workouts enjoyable by listening to music or podcasts. Setting measurable and realistic goals can help you avoid becoming a gym dropout.

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Chill out.

Just two to three minutes under cool water in the shower can boost your mood.