

Family and Community Health “Connections” in Tom Green County



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Healthy Eating for a Happy Heart

When stress hits hard like it has during the pandemic, many of us eat more, and less-than-healthy comfort foods may be the treats we reach for first. But an unhealthy response to stress can be hard on your body, especially your heart. That’s why it’s smart – at the top of the New Year, or anytime – to try to eat more foods that nourish. It’ll make your heart happier, and maybe trim your waistline, too.

Don’t know where to start? Let the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, NHLBI, help.

“We have many recipes for healthy and really tasty dishes, plus an award-winning eating plan called Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, or DASH for short,” said Charlotte Pratt, Ph.D., M.S., R.D., a nutrition expert at NHLBI. For years, the DASH eating plan has ranked among the U.S. News & World Reports’ best diets for healthy living and heart health. It’s secret, said Pratt is “eating nutrient-dense foods and meals that are lower in sodium and saturated fat, rich in fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, and legumes.”

Some of the recipes NHLBI has developed to support the plan feature healthy versions of comfort foods, such as oven-baked french fries, chicken chile stew, and sweet potato custard. The recipes are easy to make and family-friendly. They include traditional African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Vietnamese, Latino, and Filipino dishes. You can find these recipes, along with tips on safe cooking, what to stock in your kitchen, and food shopping at healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov.

“The DASH eating plan is scientifically proven to lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels,” said Pratt. And NHLBI research shows that increasing your physical activity and watching your calories while following DASH will also help you lose weight.

DASH requires no special foods, and it helps you set daily and weekly nutritional goals using these simple guides:

- Eat vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
- Include fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts and vegetable oils.
- Limit foods that are high in saturated fat, such as fatty meats, full-fat dairy foods and tropical oils such as coconut, palm kernel and palm oils.
- Limit sugar sweetened drinks and desserts.

To make it easier to follow the DASH for life, these tips can help:

- **Change gradually.** Add one more serving of vegetables a day. Read nutrition labels to choose the food lowest in saturated fat, sodium or salt and added sugar.
- **Vary foods high in proteins.** Try a mix of lean cuts of meat. Remove the skin from chicken. Eat fish once or twice a week. Eat two or more meals without meat each week.
- **Select healthy, tasty snacks.** Have a piece of fruit, a few unsalted snacks such as rice cakes, fat-free or low-fat yogurt, or raw vegetables with a low-fat dip.
- **Find substitutes.** Try whole-wheat bread or brown rice instead of white bread or white rice. Try beans or seeds such as flax or sunflower seeds if you’re allergic to nuts.
- **Follow U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommendations.**

Source: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/heart-month/slides>

February Gardening Tips

Planting.

Even though it's still wintertime, there are many types of plants that can or should be planted at this time of year. Early- to mid-February is vegetable planting time for cool season crops including onions, Irish potatoes, radishes, greens, lettuce, spinach, sugar snap peas, carrots, broccoli transplants, beets, Swiss chard and turnips. Early planting assures a good harvest prior to the arrival of summer heat.

Don't be in a hurry to plant summer vegetables such as tomato, peppers, and squash – the average last winter freeze for the Tyler area is mid-March. A late frost or freeze will result in repeated plantings of frost-sensitive vegetables. Summer vegetables not only require warm air temperatures, but also warm soils to quickly establish and grow vigorously.

February is time to plant many types of shrubs and trees including roses, bare rooted fruit and nut trees, grapes, blueberries and blackberries. Hardy container-grown trees, shrubs and groundcovers can also be planted this month.

Some other gardening items for February include:

- Prune and fertilize peach trees.
- Check trees and shrubs for scale insects, and treat with horticultural oil if present.
- Prune roses in mid- to late-February.
- Prepare beds and garden area for spring planting. Till in several inches of compost, composted pine bark or similar material.
- Sow seeds in flats or containers to get a jump on plant growth before hot weather arrives. Petunias, begonias, and impatiens should be sown in February. Warm temperature plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and periwinkles, should be sown in early February.
- Need to move shrubs or young trees to a new location? Now is the time.
- Cut back perennials and ornamental grasses before new growth begins.
- Fertilize pansies and other cool-season flowers.
- Check compost pile and turn.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicide in mid- to late February to lawns for weed control (but ONLY if weeds were a problem last summer. No need to apply herbicides to thick, healthy, weed-free lawns). A pre-emergent herbicide will not control existing weeds.
- Wait until April to fertilize St. Augustine and Bermuda grass lawns.
- Keep bird feeders stocked for both winter residents and migrating species.
- Get bluebird and other nest boxes ready.
- Check junipers, other narrow-leaf evergreens and roses for bagworm pouches. The insect eggs over-winter in the pouch, and start the cycle again by emerging in the spring to begin feeding on the foliage. Hand removal and discarding of the pouches reduces future damage.



Source: <https://agrillife.org/etg/2012/02/14/february-gardening-tips/>

Tree Picture: Trees.png (2400×1570) (openclipart.org)

Bird Picture: animal-1299357_960_720.png (618×720) (pixabay.com)

Bring American Heart Month to Your Hispanic/Latino Community: Join the #OurHearts Movement

February is American Heart Month! Did you know that people who have close relationships at home, work, or in their community tend to be healthier and live longer? One reason, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, NHLBI, is that we're more successful at meeting our health goals when we work on them with others. NHLBI launched the #OurHearts movement to inspire us to protect and strengthen our hearts with the support of others.

Here are some facts, how-to tips, and resources to inspire you to join with others, even if you can't be physically together, to improve your heart health.

Heart disease is a leading cause of death for Hispanics/Latinos in the United States. Health problems that increase the risk of heart disease are common in Latino/Hispanic communities, including being overweight and having high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. People with poor cardiovascular health are also at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Why Connecting is Good for Your Heart

Feeling connected with others and having positive, close relationships benefit our overall health, including our blood pressure and weight. Having people in our lives who will motivate and care for us helps, as do feelings of closeness and companionship.

Follow these lifestyle tips to protect your heart. It will be easier and more successful if you work on them with others, including by texting or phone calls if needed:

- Be more physically active.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a nutritious diet.
- Quit smoking.
- Reduce stress.
- Get 7-8 hours of quality sleep.
- Track your heart health stats.

You don't have to make big changes all at once. Small steps will get you where you want to go. Here are some ways to get started.

Move More

Invite family, friends, colleagues, or members of your community to join you in your efforts to be more physically active:

- Ask a colleague to walk "with you" on a regular basis, put the date on both your calendars, and text or call to make sure you both get out for a walk.
- Get a friend or family member to sign up for the same online exercise class, such as a dance class. Make it a regular date!
- Grab your kids, put on music, and do jumping jacks, skip rope, or dance in your living room or yard.

Did you know?

In the United States, Hispanic/Latino women age 20 and older:
79% are overweight, 32% have high blood pressure, 39% have high cholesterol, and 14% have been diagnosed with diabetes.
Hispanic/Latino men age 20 and older:
82% are overweight, 31% have high blood

How much is enough?

Aim for at least 2½ hours of physical activity each week—that's just 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. In addition, do muscle strengthening exercises 2 days a week. Can't carve out a lot of time in your day? Don't chuck your goal, chunk it! Try 10 or 15 minutes a few times a day. NHLBI's Move More fact sheet has ideas to get and keep you moving.



Roasted Cauliflower Tacos



This recipe yields 4 servings and takes just an hour to make, start to finish!

Ingredients:

- 1 small cauliflower, outer leaves and core discarded, cut into small florets
- 1 pound red cabbage, thinly sliced (about 1/2 small red cabbage or 6 cups sliced)
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 12 corn tortillas, warmed
- Thinly sliced radishes, optional
- Sliced serrano peppers, optional
- Avocado slices, optional
- Cilantro, optional

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Place the cauliflower and cabbage on a large sheet pan. Drizzle with the olive oil and sprinkle with the cumin, coriander, and salt. Use your hands to mix everything together and spread it out into an even layer. Roast, stirring every 15 minutes, until the vegetables are softened and browned in spots, about 45 minutes. (I roasted my cabbage and cauliflower on two separate sheet pans. I cooked the cauliflower for 25 minutes and the cabbage for 10 minutes. Both ways work!)
3. Evenly divide the roasted vegetables among the tortillas. Serve immediately with the radishes, serranos, avocado slices, and cilantro, if using.

Source: <https://www.loveandlemons.com/cauliflower-tacos/>

Tom Green EEA News

Veribest Club Meeting:

February 8, 2022
@ Main Street Café / Dutch Treat
11:00 a.m.

Program:

Station 618 Services
Hostess: Nancy Bilberry

Family & Community Health “*Connections*” is provided by these Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family and Community Health Agents:

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