Featured Article

February is American Heart Health month. Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S. and is responsible for every 1 in 5 deaths.

You have probably heard the term 'heart disease' either from a health care professional, in the news, or from your family or friends. But do you really know what heart disease is? Heart disease is a term used to refer to several types of conditions of the heart. The most common type of heart disease is coronary artery disease (CAD). CAD occurs when plaque builds up in the walls of the arteries which reduces blood flow. Many people do not know that they have CAD and, in fact, they may learn about their heart's condition for the first time when they have a heart attack. The good news is that a majority of cardiovascular diseases (80%) ARE preventable following a healthy lifestyle. Here are the top 5 things you can do to improve your heart health, starting TODAY!

1. Stop smoking! Smoking increases blood pressure and can promote build up of plaque in arteries.
2. Move your body! Physical activity helps control cholesterol, diabetes, and maintain a healthy weight.
3. Reduce stress! Stress disrupts our hormones and sleep and may lead to overeating or smoking.
4. Eat a well-balanced diet! Limit sugars, fats, and refine carbs and choose foods rich in nutrients. Aim for more fruit and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and healthy fats.
5. Keep blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugars within normal range! High levels cause the heart to work more increasing your risk.

BONUS TIP - Know you health numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol, lipids)! Schedule your appointment today with your health care provider to learn your health numbers.

In Good Health,
Chelsea Reinberg, MPH, RD
Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent
Recipe of the Month

Beef & Pasta Skillet Primavera

Serves 4

Ingredients
1 lb ground beef (96% lean)
1 can (14.5 oz) reduced-sodium beef broth
1 cup uncooked whole wheat pasta
2 medium zucchini or yellow squash, cut in half then cut into 1/2 inch slices
1 can (14.5 oz) no salt added diced tomatoes
1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
1/2 teaspoons black pepper
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

Preparation
- Heat large nonstick skilled over medium heat.
- Add ground beef and cook 8 to 10 minutes, breaking into crumbles and stirring occasionally until fully cooked to a temperature of 160°F. Pour off fat drippings or blot with paper towel.
- Stir in broth, pasta, squash, tomatoes, and seasoning.
- Bring to a boil
- Reduce heat, cover and cook 9 to 11 minutes or until pasta and squash are tender and sauce is slightly thickened, stirring occasionally.

Tips:
- Experiment with other spices like red pepper flakes.
- Use lean ground turkey instead of ground beef.

Nutrition Facts

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Recipe adapted from beefitswhatsfordinner.com

Fun Food Facts

February 12-18
Great American Pizza Bake

Nothing says it's the weekend more than pizza and a movie on a Saturday night. It's so popular that about 350 slices of pizza are consumed every second in the U.S.! Pizza is traditionally a higher fat food. Try making your own pizza during Great American Pizza Bake week at home to get all the delicious pizza flavors with less fat. Choose lean meats, load up the veggies, and use lower fat cheese to build a better pizza.

Kitchen Corner

Reducing the amount of fat for your heart health is easier than you might think! There are many ways to cut fat out of your diet without eliminating certain foods completely. Try some of these tips during your next meal.
- Substitute applesauce or plain nonfat yogurt for oil or butter when preparing baked goods.
- Trim visible fat from meat and remove skin from chicken after cooking.
- Choose low fat cooking methods like broil, grill, roast, bake, or steam.
- Use low fat or skim milk in place of whole milk.
- Use nonstick cooking spray to sauté foods instead of butter or oil.
- Substitute beans, whole grains, or vegetables for a portion of meat in dishes like soups and stews, casseroles, and other mixed dishes.