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February is American Heart Month!

Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death among American adults. It is the cause of 1 in 4 deaths every year. It's not all doom and gloom; heart disease is in part preventable by making healthy choices and managing health conditions. National Heart Month is all about raising awareness about this potentially devastating subject. During this time of year, we see hearts everywhere as a sign of love and affection. This is the perfect time to show your own heart some love by making some small changes toward becoming "Heart Healthy."

There are some risk factors for heart disease; some are out of our control and a few are things we can work on controlling. First..... take it one step at a time. The single best way to make lifestyle changes is to start small and make one or two changes at a time and stick with them. Then slowly add changes as you master the previous ones.

The number one biggest risk factor that you can change is diet. Eat a healthy diet by choosing foods low in Saturated Fat and with little to no Trans-Fat. Lower the amount of added salt by not placing the salt shaker at the table. Add more fresh fruits and vegetables into your diet, as they serve several functions. Fruits and vegetables displace the "bad" choices, are high in fiber to help you feel full and they help to lower your cholesterol. For more ideas, please visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

The 2nd biggest risk factor that you can change is your physical activity. Your heart is just like any other muscle - it needs exercise! Exercise also helps with maintaining a healthy body weight, which in turn, helps with blood pressure and cholesterol. The Surgeon General recommends that adults should participate in moderate activities for at least 30 minutes daily. The health benefits of exercise are cumulative, you don't have to do it all at once, so incorporate it into your daily routine. Some simple ways are to take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk to your mailbox instead of driving, park farther away while shopping, and use a rake instead of a leaf blower.

The 3rd biggest risk factor is your overall health/conditions. This is not completely under your control, however, how you take care of your health is in your control. Make sure to see your physician regularly even if you feel healthy, and follow his/her advice. Some risk factors such as hypertension (high blood pressure) and diabetes can go unnoticed, so be sure to get your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar checked regularly.

Here are some things to keep in mind as you begin to make small changes to improve your health:

- ♥ Try not to become overwhelmed. Remember, baby steps - every small step you take brings you that much closer to your heart's health.
- ♥ Don't do it alone! Health is more fun when you are in the company of those who are making the same journey. You are more likely to be successful if you work together with your family and friends on your goals.
- ♥ Don't let small setbacks discourage you. Remember it is an ongoing process! Every healthy choice counts! Get plenty of sleep/rest and begin anew in the morning.
- ♥ De-Stress! Reward yourself with fun activities to help lower your stress, and get others involved to keep you going.

For more information on Heart Health, please visit the American Heart Association: www.heart.org or the Million Hearts Campaign website at www.millionhearts.hhs.gov



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February is Berry Fresh Month



February is National Berry Month, and what better way to celebrate than to enjoy a plethora of richly-colored berries this time of year. Not only are berries delicious, they are also nutrition powerhouses—chock-full of powerful nutrients that can help you ward off diseases. Berries can easily be used in a number of dishes or can simply be enjoyed on their own as a sweet, low-calorie snack.

Berries pack quite the nutritional punch for their small size. They are loaded with potassium, which can help lower your blood pressure. Berries also deliver a huge dose of phytochemicals, which are components in plants that have antioxidant properties that may help prevent inflammation. Chronic inflammation, even low-grade inflammation, can contribute to a host of diseases, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease and many types of cancer.

Berries are also an excellent source of fiber, known to provide a plethora of health benefits. The fabulous fiber in berries can help lower your cholesterol. Reducing your blood cholesterol is important for heart and brain health. High cholesterol can also increase your risk for strokes, heart disease, heart attacks and other cardiovascular conditions. A cup of berries can contain between 2-8 grams of fiber.

In addition to being praised for what nutrients they do provide, berries should also receive high marks for what they're low in—calories! A cup of sliced strawberries contains a mere 53 calories and a cup of blueberries contains 84. Berries are also naturally sweet, making them a great alternative to higher calorie treats. Berries can easily be added to your diet. Here are some quick, easy, tasty ways to provide your body with a bounty of berries:

- Top your morning cereal or oatmeal with a variety of berries.
- Add berries to your favorite baked goods, including pancakes, waffles, muffins, breads, and desserts.
- Lighten up your ice-cream sundae by topping a one-half cup serving of ice-cream with a huge handful of berries.
- Make fruit and yogurt parfaits with a low-sugar yogurt, fresh or thawed frozen berries, and your favorite granola or crunchy cereal.

Triple Berry Smoothie with Yogurt

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 ounces frozen mixed berries
- 2 small bananas, cut into 2-inch pieces and frozen
- 6 ounces low fat or fat free vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup low fat or fat free milk
- 1 cup ice

DIRECTIONS:

Add the berries, bananas, yogurt, milk and ice to a blender and puree until smooth.

Pour into glasses and serve immediately.



Happy Valentine's Day



SAVE THE DATE

ALHAMBRA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S

Arts Alive

SATURDAY, MARCH 21st 2020 / 8AM—NOON
CORDOVA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
5631 N 35TH AVENUE



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