

Northeast Region Newsletter

Flavors
OF HEALTH



February is Heart American Month

by Markaye Russell

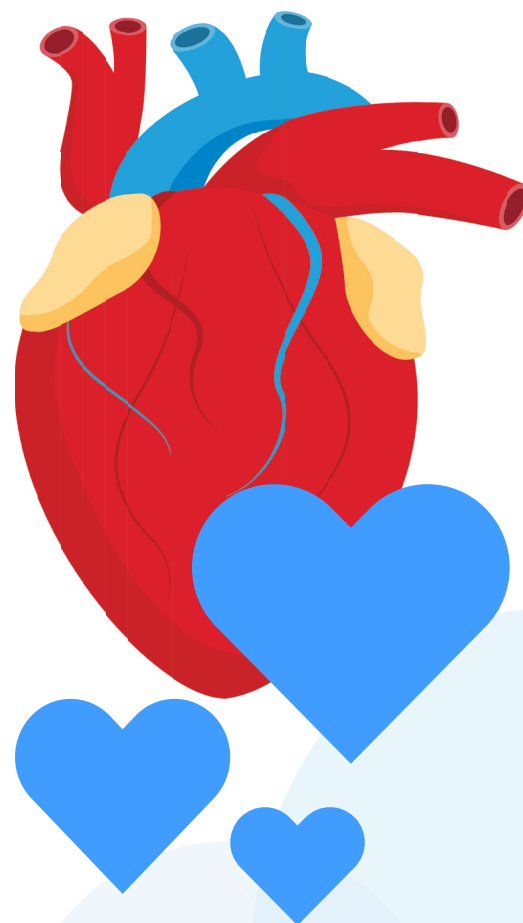
February is American Heart Month, a time when all people can focus on their cardiovascular health. The Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention is shining a light on hypertension (high blood pressure), a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Taking care of your heart health has never been more important and there's a lot you can do to prevent heart disease.

By living a healthy lifestyle, you can help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range. Are you interested in leading a more heart healthy lifestyle? Small steps go a long way especially when you connect with others to stay motivated and eating healthy. Practice the following healthy living habits:

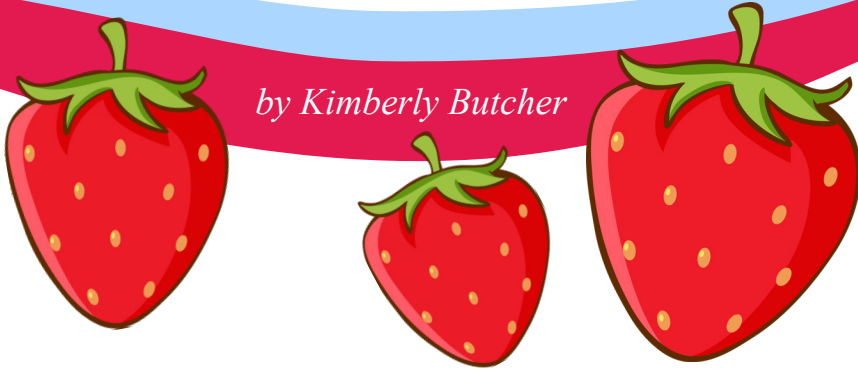
- Choose healthy meals and snack options to help you avoid high blood pressure and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Reduce your foods that are high in sodium.
- Having overweight or obesity increases your risk for high blood pressure.
- Physical activity can help keep you at a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure.
- Smoking raises your blood pressure and puts you at higher risk for heart attack and stroke.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink, it can raise your blood pressure.
- Getting enough sleep is important to your overall health.

Too much salt in our diet can make us retain fluid. So, what can we do reduce our intake of salt?

- Reduce intake of processed foods.
- Limit intake of smoked/cured meats.
- Eliminate adding salt at the table.
- Instead of salt, use spices and herbs to season food.
- Prepare foods at home using less salt.
- Rinse canned vegetables and meats to help take some of the salt out of it or choose low sodium or salt-free canned vegetables, sauces, meats, etc.
- Condiments can also be sneaky sources of sodium.



Kid Stuff:



by Kimberly Butcher

FOOD SAFE FAMILIES

by Cecilia Stevens



Food insecurity affects 1 in 6 adults in northeast Louisiana and 1 in 4 children. Many of these families receive assistance from charitable food organizations such as the Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana and local food pantries including religious and civic organizations. It is important that both the food distributors and food recipients understand safe storage methods for staple foods.

Staple food items include dried and canned foods including shelf-stable dairy products. USDA commodity boxes often include dried beans, wheat pasta, and dried cereals. It is important to store these items in a cool, dry area protected from pests and animal contact. Shelving that is at least 6 inches off the ground is ideal. Transferring food packaged in bags to glass or plastic containers with tight-fitting lids will extend the shelf life of dried foods.

Any items received that show damage or contamination should be discarded. This includes dented cans or damaged packaging. Charitable food distributors inspect items prior to donation, but damage may occur before distribution. For maximum food safety, it is best to remember the adage “when in doubt, throw it out.”

For those donating to a food pantry, remember that out-of-date food items are not allowed. This also relates to fresh produce donations. Think of the food pantry patrons as members of your own family. Protect the safety of these families when selecting items to donate.

February is the month of love and what better way to celebrate than to make a delicious healthy treat with your little ones! This tasty dessert is packed with protein and vitamin C to keep you and your kids healthy and strong.

Frozen Yogurt Covered Strawberry Hearts

Ingredients:

- 2 cups non-fat vanilla Greek yogurt
- 1-quart strawberries

Directions:

Wash and rinse strawberries. Cut the stems off making a V-shaped divot. Dip whole strawberries in yogurt and place on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Freeze overnight. Cut in half to reveal a heart shape. Keep frozen until ready to serve.

ACTIVITY CORNER

with Quincy Vidrine

Get Moving for a Healthy Heart

Adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise or movement each week. Living an active lifestyle that includes 150 minutes of weekly exercise can help lower blood pressure, improve blood cholesterol levels, and reduce the risk of diabetes, which is the one of the leading risk factors for heart disease. Find an activity that you love and get moving!



S.M.I.L.E.



for a Happy, Healthy Heart *by Joy Sims*

During this month we want to share ways you can encourage a heart healthy lifestyle at home. Heart disease is one of many a largely preventable cardiovascular illnesses and yet it is the leading cause of death in the United States. According to the Center for Infectious Disease and Policy, deaths due to high blood pressure in the U. S. increased over a four-month period after the pandemic was announced in 2020. It is incredibly important to connect with a medical professional about your cholesterol and blood pressure to be well informed of your body's needs but there are many ways you can S.M.I.L.E. to stay heart healthy at home!

S

Stick to a sleep schedule. Manage your stress levels and rest to keep your heart pumping. A good night's sleep is essential to healthy living; adults and kids should make sure to get a minimum of 8 hours of sleep before rising to a new day.



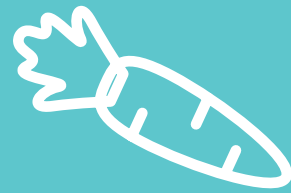
M

Meditate for stress relief. Mindful moments are a great way to manage stress levels. Stopping for a moment after a meeting or before you get started on your projects just to close your eyes and take a few deep breaths can boost your energy and focus! There are many apps to help in addition to seeking medical professionals for personalized assistance.



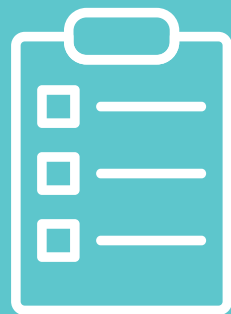
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Incorporate heart healthy foods. Add lean meats, dark vegetables, and fruit that are low in cholesterol in our diet where possible; they taste great, and they are good for you. Avoid fried foods, heavy sweets, and high sodium foods where possible. You can visit www.snaped.fns.gov for ideas and inspiration.



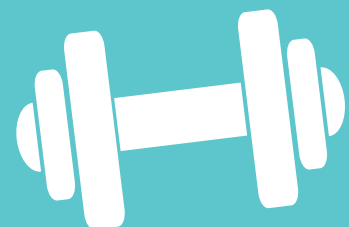
L

List your daily tasks. Organizing your tasks and adding breaks in between can help mitigate some of the mental heavy lifting you may have to do daily. Invest in a planner to minimize stress in your day to day.



E

Exercise for a healthy heart. Exercise is always a great way to lose/maintain a healthy weight, increase stamina for everyday activities, and just to feel brighter emotionally. You can connect with neighbors and family to build a walking or biking group. You could also arrange an outdoor play day with family. If you don't have weights, you can use household items such as laundry baskets, canned goods, pots, and pans.



UPCOMING EVENTS

ONGOING:

Workout Wednesday VIRTUAL Walking Group, 12PM Ouachita Parish:

First and third Wednesdays of every month. Contact Cathy Agan for more information.

IN-PERSON Break Up With Salt Series, 12PM West Carroll Parish:

Every Wednesday in the month of February, a series that teaches attendees how to lower their sodium intake. Contact Brittney Newsome for more information.

FCS Nutrition Advisory Leadership Council Meeting, 2PM Franklin Parish:

Wednesday, February 23, 2022, Franklin Parish Extension Office 6562 Main Street Winnsboro, LA. 318-435-8216

INFORMATION

Catahoula/Concordia Parishes, Ana Gouge, (318) 414-6055

East Carroll/Morehouse Parishes, Jocinda Jackson, (318) 559-1459

Franklin Parish/Caldwell Parishes/FCS Regional Coordinator, Quincy Vidrine, (318) 435-2903CDC

Food Systems Coordinator, Cecilia Stevens, (318) 435-2908

Madison/Tensas Parishes, Joy Sims, (318) 574-2465

Ouachita Parish, Cathy Agan, (318) 323-2251

Ouachita/Morehouse Parishes, Kimberly Butcher, (318) 323-2251

Ouachita/Union Parish, Markaye Russell, (318) 323-2251

Richland/West Carroll Parishes, Brittney Newsome, (318) 281-5741



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Dr. Luke Laborde, LSU Vice President for Agriculture Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, LSU College of Agriculture. The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Dr. Luke Laborde, LSU Vice President for Agriculture Louisiana State University Agricultural Center Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service LSU College of Agriculture If you need an ADA accommodation for your participation, please contact Quincy Vidrine at least two weeks prior to the event. The LSU AgCenter provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.