



EAT YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHIER HEART

In a time when we've grown accustomed to being told what NOT to eat, some experts are taking a different approach. They're telling us what we CAN eat to reduce inflammation that damages the human heart.

Typically, inflammation is a good thing: It proves that our bodies are working to fight illness or repair damage. But, if your arteries are clogged with cholesterol and plaque, your body works continually to try to repair damage. The result? Inflammation that goes on for too long and does more harm than good.

The good news is, you can work against that inflammation and reduce your risk of heart disease by eating the right things. The even better news? In this case, "the right things" are things you probably like. Here are a few examples.

Sources: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/fight-inflammation-to-help-prevent-heart-disease>. Accessed 14 January 2021.
<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/13-anti-inflammatory-foods>. Accessed 14 January 2021.

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Berries. Strawberries, blueberries and their kin are packed with antioxidants, which fight inflammation.

Fish. Salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring and anchovies send good health swimming through your veins.

Olive oil. Sure, olive oil is technically a fat, but it's a healthy fat linked to a wide range of benefits.

Dark chocolate. It's not often a health expert tells you to eat chocolate, but heart docs like dark chocolate because it's also packed with antioxidants.

Smart Facts

34%

is the decline in annual death rate attributed to coronary heart disease in the US between 2005 and 2015.

25%

of deaths in the US are attributed to heart disease.

OMEGA-3

fatty acids EPA and DHA found in fish are shown to reduce inflammation that can lead to heart disease.

Sources: <https://theheartfoundation.org/heart-disease-facts-2/>. Accessed 14 January 2021.



AVOID SOCIAL-ISOLATION BLUES THIS WINTER

During the warmer months, we could fend off the worst of pandemic isolation by gathering with friends and family outside. But, now that winter has set in, people living in colder parts of the country are feeling the chill of isolation more than ever.

For many of us, that means the blues could come on and we might feel like we have no recourse. But, mental health experts say there's plenty we can do to get through this winter of isolation. Below are some tips to help with our winter blues:

Give yourself time to grieve. Miami-based mental health counselor Raquel Espinel Suarez says acknowledging the pain of isolation is fine, so long as you don't dwell on it. "It's okay to give ourselves time and space to cry, complain or be angry at a time like this," she says. "But remember to set a timer—literally—so that there's a hard end to any wallowing. Once it dings, do something that will trigger happiness, bring back a pleasant memory or make you smile."

Engage your senses. Activating your senses can help boost your mood. So eat something spicy, light fragrant candles (aromas like vanilla and pine have proven to reduce anxiety and depression) or put on music that moves you.

Connect virtually. Sure, many of us are sick of Zoom meetings, but spending time on video chats with people you love can be good for you. Set up time to play games using technology, to discuss movies you've watched, or even to have a virtual dinner party. Don't let social distancing equate to social disconnection.

Schedule fun. Being "stuck" with your family doesn't have to mean being stuck in a rut. Schedule fun activities for times when you might otherwise all go off in different directions. You might have to get creative to think of something fresh, but that should add to the fun.

Get mindful. "Mindfulness" has become a bit of a buzzword, substituting in some cases for "meditation," which puts some people off as "new agey." But the truth is, taking the time to quiet your mind can be helpful in times like these, and it doesn't have to be intimidating. A number of apps are available to help you get into your head and get out of your funk. Popular ones are Headspace, Calm and Simple Habit. Check them out and see if they help you dispel the dismay of pandemic isolation.



"Do something that will trigger happiness, bring back a pleasant memory or make you smile."

Sources: <https://www.oprahmag.com/life/health/a32305875/mood-boosters-science-proven-tips/>. Accessed 14 January 2021.
<https://www.familymeans.org/articles/2020/03/18/mindfulness-phone-apps-to-support-mental-health-during-social-distancing/>. Accessed 14 January 2021.
<https://www.scmp.com/better-life/well-being/article/3083862/5-ways-improve-your-mental-health-while-youre-social>. Accessed 14 January 2021.
<https://www.businessinsider.com/5-activities-to-improve-mental-health-while-youre-social-distancing-2020-4#4-change-your-language-4>. Accessed 14 January 2021.

WORK WITH YOUR EMPLOYER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Americans are generous. Each year, we donate more than \$400 billion to charities and volunteer nearly 7 billion hours of our time. But the truth is, those numbers could be even higher if more donors and volunteers coordinated their efforts with employers.

The opportunity is there, because many companies support employees' charitable efforts, recognizing that doing so not only improves the communities in which they operate. But, as DoubletheDonation.com points out, it also boosts employee engagement, which is a key driver of productivity.

Employees who take advantage of their employer's charitable programs can enjoy a wide range of benefits, from actually getting paid to volunteer to seeing their donations to nonprofits doubled. Following are some of the best ways to take advantage of employer-sponsored programs to make a difference in your community and the world.

Payroll deduction programs. Sometimes we intend to make a donation, but we forget, or we run out of time, or ... well, we just don't get around to it. The solution? Have your employer deduct funds from your paycheck to give to charity. It's a great give-on-the-installment-plan approach that makes it easy to be generous. The downside? Your options might be limited to charities chosen by your company. But, if you believe in those charitable choices, you can do good every time you get paid.

Employee gift matching. Many employers will match employees' charitable donations dollar-for-dollar. Tapping into that doubling power is often as simple as filling out a form. A recent study suggested that nearly 80 percent of people who work for companies that offer matches don't realize they have that option.

Team volunteering. These days, a lot of communities have days when companies send teams into the community to partner with nonprofits in their work. Take advantage of those days and you'll end up getting paid to do good.

Paid time off to volunteer. While volunteering with your team is great, sometimes you'd like to choose your own cause to support with your time. But, fitting volunteer time around work can be hard. Fortunately, some employers are taking that problem off the table by offering paid days off to volunteer as you please. In fact, according to the Society for Human Resource Management, more than one-fifth of all employers offer this option.

The opportunity to lobby for your cause. Many employers that support charities make their gift decisions based on their employees' interest. Make sure your employer knows about organizations and causes important to you and you just might find that your favorite charity gets a check from your firm.

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American Heart Month

Each year, one out of every four deaths in the United States is a result of heart disease, making it the nation's leading cause of death. Many of those deaths could be prevented with awareness, treatment and lifestyle changes. Learn more at <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/heart-month>.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: KALE

According to kale legend (who knew THAT was a thing?), prior to 2012 the largest buyer of kale in the U.S. was – wait for it – Pizza Hut. But the red-roofed chain wasn't using kale for salads or spicy pies. It was decorating salad bars with the curly green leaves.

Since 2012, however, kale has become a staple in produce aisles, kitchens and eateries from coast to coast. Why? Some say this rise was simply the product of good P.R. and aggressive marketing, but others point to the leafy green's health benefits. After all, kale is packed with vitamins, it's one of those anti-inflammatory foods that are good for your heart (see page one), and it offers other benefits, from cancer prevention to improved skin.

Kale also has emerged as a culinary favorite because it's versatile, able to anchor everything from basic salads to soups and main dishes. And, like Pizza Hut, you also might find that it simply looks good on your table.

When shopping for kale, choose leaves that are firm and deeply-colored, and choose smaller leaves to get a milder flavor. Pass up any leaves that look wilted, or that are turning brown or yellow. The season for the freshest kale will be mid-winter through early spring, but you can find it any time of the year.



Source: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/270435>. Accessed 14 January 2021.
<https://www.everydayhealth.com/diet-nutrition/diet/kale-nutrition-health-benefits-types-how-cook-more/>. Accessed 14 January 2021.
<http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=38>. Accessed 14 January 2021.



Recipe: Kale, Tomato and Pancetta Pasta

Ingredients:

8 ounces uncooked whole-wheat pasta (preferably orecchiette)
3 cups cherry tomatoes, divided
3 ounces pancetta, diced
4 cups chopped, stemmed kale
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated (about ¼ cup)
2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted

Directions:

Cook pasta according to package directions (omit any recommended salt and fat). Drain in a colander over a bowl; reserve 1½ cups cooking liquid. Chop 1 cup tomatoes, halve remaining tomatoes. Cook pancetta in a large nonstick skillet over medium until crisp (about 8 minutes). Remove pancetta from pan with a slotted spoon. Add chopped tomatoes to drippings in pan; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened (about 2 minutes). Add halved tomatoes, kale, garlic, rosemary, pepper and salt; cook 2 minutes. Add 1 cup reserved cooking liquid; cover and cook until kale is wilted (about 2 minutes). Stir in pasta and pancetta. Add remaining ½ cup cooking liquid, 2 tablespoons at a time, as needed to thin sauce. Top with cheese and pine nuts.

Nutrition Information:

CALORIES: 380; PROTEIN: 16G; FAT: 15G; CARBS: 50G; FIBER: 7G;
SODIUM: 575MG; SUGAR: 5G

Source: cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1890-roasted-brussels-sprouts-with-garlic. Accessed 12/21/2020.