

360° OF WELLNESS

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UW-GREEN BAY WELLNESS COMMITTEE

HEART HEALTHY EATING

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Hearts are a well-known symbol for Valentine's Day, and each should be cherished and respected—just like your own heart. With this special day just around the corner, you may be tempted to load up on festive candy and other sugary snacks. Although it may be difficult to resist the urge to buy a box of chocolate or indulge in some ice cream, making small changes to your diet can create a lasting impact on your heart health—and help you maintain your New Year's resolutions. Explore suggestions below for continued wellness through heart-healthy eating.

Avoid Sugary Foods

Chocolate: the classic Valentine's Day staple food. We all deserve a bite now and then and although milk chocolate can be tempting, next time give dark chocolate a try for its blood thinning effects, which can improve cardiovascular health. Hungry for ice cream or custard? Try frozen yogurt instead! Yogurt has been proven to protect against gum disease, which can lead to many heart problems. Plan to make heart-shaped cookies for your significant other this month? Consider switching out those chocolate chips for raisins! Raisins contain antioxidants, which fight

bacteria responsible for gum inflammation that can lead to heart issues.

Eat More Whole Grains

Whole-grain foods have been shown to prevent coronary diseases. Small changes in your diet and portions of your meals can make a big difference! For instance, switch out that flour tortilla for a whole-grain version, order or make a whole-grain pizza crust—once covered with delicious toppings, you won't even be able to tell the difference, but your heart will thank you. Pizza also has another healthy bonus: Tomatoes! Tomatoes are high in various vitamins that help to prevent heart disease.

Eat Less Red Meat

Eating less bacon and steak may sound like more of a punishment than a healthy-eating suggestion. After all, candlelight dinners at a fancy steakhouses are a very common occurrence on Valentine's Day. Dan Nadeau, MD, endocrinologist at Mary and Dick Allen Diabetes Center at Hoag Hospital in Irvine, California explain that "Diets rich in animal products contribute to the increased risk incidence of

obesity as well as type 2 diabetes in the U.S." In addition to increasing your risks for type 2 diabetes and obesity, carnitine, a chemical found in red meat, has been proven to harden arteries over time. Yikes! While small amounts of red meat are fine, moderation is the key to having a healthy heart.

Following these simple suggestions can help you to lead a healthier, more worry-free life. Decreasing the risks of gum disease, diabetes, and obesity should be on everyone's to-do list for 2015. To find out more about Wellness at UW-Green Bay, visit <http://blog.uwgb.edu/hr/category/wellness/>.

American Heart Association MyStart! Tool

Looking for a way to start tracking your physical activities? Thinking about starting a food diary to keep track of your nutrition and daily intake? Want to see just how far you've walked and calculate different walking/running routes? Try using the American Heart Association MyStart! Tool. This free online tool let's you do all these things and more. Simply go to <http://www.startwalkingnow.org/home.jsp> and click on Become a Member to create an account.

Heart Healthy Recipe: Three Sisters Soup

Ingredients:

- *6 cups fat-free, low sodium chicken stock or vegetable stock
- *1 16-ounce can low sodium yellow corn or hominy, drained & rinsed
- *1 16-ounce can low sodium kidney beans, drained & rinsed
- *1 small onion, chopped
- *1 celery rib, chopped
- *1 15-ounce can cooked pumpkin
- *5 fresh sage leaves, chopped or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- *1/2 teaspoon curry powder

Directions:

- 1) Bring stock to a slow boil
- 2) Add corn/hominy, beans, onion and celery
- 3) Boil for 10 minutes
- 4) Add sage leaves, curry and pumpkin, and simmer on medium-low heat for 20 minutes

