

FRESH FOOD SHARE

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February is American Heart Month

February is usually associated with red heart-shaped boxes of chocolates, Cupid, and a time to remember your personal sweetheart. However, February is also American Heart Month - a time to get tuned into the health of the organ that keeps our blood pumping and makes life possible. Heart disease remains a top killer of Americans, so focusing on things that can lead to a healthy heart is important.



This year marks the 50th anniversary of February being American Heart Month. The first national American Heart Month was designated by President Lyndon B. Johnson, himself a heart attack survivor, through Proclamation 3566 and recognized in February of 1964. Since then, each sitting President of the United States has proclaimed February "American Heart Month". This year is no exception with President Barack Obama's proclamation calling on all of us to take steps towards a healthier life.

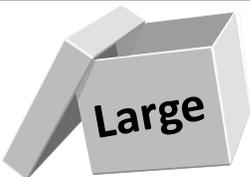
Make this the month that you commit to taking the best care of yourself that you can. Enjoy your fruits and vegetables – especially the red ones we have included in this month's Fresh Food Share box in honor of American Heart Month.

Week by week tips for taking control of your health can be found at CDC's website at: http://www.cdc.gov/salt/healthy_heart_tips.htm

9 Step Healthy Heart Plan

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** sets out a 9 step plan for a healthier heart. (The first of which you have a jump start on with your Fresh Food Share box!):

1. **Eat a healthy diet.** Eating a healthy diet includes eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables—adults should have at least 5 servings each day.
2. **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese can increase your risk for heart disease.
3. **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure.
4. **Monitor your blood pressure.** High blood pressure can often have no symptoms, so be sure to have it checked on a regular basis.
5. **Don't smoke.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease.
6. **Limit alcohol use.** Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can increase your blood pressure.
7. **Have your cholesterol checked.**
8. **Manage your diabetes.** If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels closely, and talk with your doctor about treatment options.
9. **Take your medicine.** If you're taking medication to treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, follow your doctor's instructions carefully.



Your Share This Month

Red Potatoes
Red Onions
Leaf Lettuce
Carrots

Chard
Kale
Beets
Garlic

Broccoli
Red Pepper
Brussels
Tomato

Celery
Watermelon
Grapefruit
Apples

Get Caught Red Handed

Rather than featuring a single vegetable, this month is an ode to what makes red produce so special. Many red foods are good sources of Vitamin A and C (red peppers and strawberries contain more vitamin C than oranges) which support important mechanisms in your body including iron absorption, cell and tissue growth, and immune system and vision health. Red foods have been attributed to heart, prostate, eye, and urinary tract health, as well as improved immune system function and increased memory function.

Depending on the produce there are different antioxidants that are responsible for its red color. These colorful compounds help the body eliminate harmful toxins that can cause a variety of diseases -

Anthocyanin: is responsible for the red hue in apples, potatoes, cabbage, radishes, cranberries, and the color of fall leaves. They can change color when cooked which is why blueberries turn green in pancakes. These phytochemicals are often concentrated in the skins of produce (ex. red apples). Think twice before discarding this nutrient rich wrapping.

Lycopene: is behind the red coloring in peppers (sweet and chili), tomatoes, grapes, rhubarb, and watermelon. It helps the body make Vitamin A, and can reduce the risk of prostate cancer. Your body cannot produce lycopene, so you have to get it from foods you eat. Because it dissolves in fat not water cooking makes it more available for our bodies to use.

Betaine: causes the red color in beet roots and greens, and the red stems of chard. This compound aids kidney and liver function, and protects cells from outside stress.



Homemade Pasta Sauce

Homemade pasta sauce is delicious and easier to make than you might think. In addition to being tasty, pasta sauce can be very nutritious as it contains all the vitamins and nutrients of the tomatoes and any other veggies you put in it. Tomatoes are rich in vitamins A and C as well as potassium. Make sure to look for canned or boxed tomatoes that are low in sodium to keep this recipe heart healthy.

Here is a basic recipe for tomato sauce along with some ideas for additions you can use to really jazz it up. As a bonus, this sauce can be frozen for storage, so consider making two batches and freezing one the next time you make it. Make sure to leave an inch or two of space in the container (can use glass, plastic or even plastic bags made for liquid storage) you are using for expansion when it freezes.

Basic Sauce

3 Tbs. Cooking Oil
1 finely-chopped Onion
2 finely-chopped Carrots
1 finely-chopped stalk Celery and leaves
2 Garlic cloves, minced
1 Tbs. fresh, chopped Basil (or ½ Tbs. dried Basil)
1/2 Tbs. dried Thyme
1 28oz can Crushed Tomatoes
2 tsp. Tomato paste
Salt and Pepper to taste



Preparation

Heat the oil over medium heat in a large skillet or stock pot. Add onion, carrot, celery and cook until the vegetables have softened, about 10 minutes.

Add the garlic, basil and thyme and cook for an additional minute.

Decrease the heat to low and stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste and the salt and pepper. Simmer the sauce 15-20 minutes, stirring often, until the sauce has thickened and the flavors have melded together.

Variations

Add veggies: Try adding cooked veggies to the sauce. You can sauté, steam, roast or even use leftovers from another meal. Bell peppers, spinach or fresh tomatoes are a great addition. Add the cooked veggies during the last few minutes of cooking.

Add meat: Sauté crumbled sausage in a little bit of olive oil before adding to the sauce.

Add heat: Add a few splashes of your favorite brand of hot sauce or a pinch of red pepper flakes.

Add dairy: Just before serving, throw a half cup of cream, milk, ricotta or even cream cheese into the sauce. This adds richness and flavor.

Add fresh basil: Even if you used fresh basil during the cooking process, adding a handful of basil ribbons sprinkled over the sauce right before serving adds an extra punch of flavor to the dish.

Add extra-virgin olive oil: Drizzle just a little of good olive oil over the sauce before serving and you'll be amazed at how much flavor it adds. Flavored oils work well too.

Add red or white wine: Wine adds acidity and an instant flavor-boost to a pot of simple sauce. Try adding a splash or two to the pot shortly before serving.



Shop Healthy – On a Budget

Winter is here with force and that means no or very little produce growing in Michigan and nearby areas. Shipping produce from other parts of the world can make a trip to the grocery store quite costly. As you have discovered, buying a Fresh Food Share box is a great way to get your fruits and veggies cost effectively. If you're like us, you probably still have to buy some produce in between FFS boxes. Never fear! You can make smart, nutritious, and budget friendly choices at the grocery store with some tips from our Cooking Matters® at the Store curriculum. Here are some tips that will help you eat healthy year round.

Whole vs. Cut: Whole produce is usually much cheaper than cut up/processed produce. An example of this would be carrots versus baby carrots, or cut pineapple versus a whole pineapple.

Comparing prices: An easy way to check differences in price for processed fruits/vegetables is to check unit price. Unit price is price per unit of weight; usually this is price per ounce but may be price per pound. At many grocery stores this will be a smaller number next to the total price. You can use unit price in many other parts of the store and it can be very useful comparing store brand to name brand products.

Canned: Canned fruits and vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh, and have the benefit of a long shelf life. When shopping for canned vegetables watch out for the sodium (salt content). Remember when looking at the nutrition facts label to look at the serving size and servings per container first before you look at anything

else. Numbers and percentages listed are for each serving, not the whole can. Buying *low sodium and no salt added* products is an easy way to take some sodium out of our diets and they usually cost the same as the full sodium content product. This is an easy area to make a smart healthy change in your diet.

When looking at the canned fruits the main area to watch is the sugar. Pick items that are *canned in 100% juice* or choose *light syrup* instead of heavy syrup. The extra sugar in those items has no nutritional value.



Frozen: Frozen fruits and vegetables are flash frozen when they are picked, which locks in important nutrients. They also have a long shelf life and can be convenient as they are oftentimes cut up and can be saved after opening up the bag. Make sure the ingredients lists only the items you want. For example if you want frozen green beans the ingredients list should be just green beans, nothing else. *Watch out for added sugars, salts, and fats.*

One final tip, when buying juice try to buy only *100% juice*, and watch your serving size (typically 8 ounces). Don't be fooled by misleading labels. Some labels will say 100% vitamin C or 100% natural flavors, these are not 100% juice!

All in all it is important to eat a variety fruits and vegetables everyday as they are high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Thanks to Graham Patton, Cooking Matters at the Store Coordinator, for the tips!



National Hot Breakfast Month

February is National Hot Breakfast Month, perfect for this time of year. If you are looking to add something warm and delicious to your breakfast menu, try oatmeal. Making oatmeal from scratch is very simple and quick, lets you control how much sugar you consume (instant oatmeal usually has lots of added sugar), and you can make a batch that lasts the whole week at once and reheat later. An added bonus is that oatmeal contains lots of fiber which helps to reduce "bad cholesterol" making it heart healthy. Not the biggest oatmeal fan? Try dressing it up fresh fruit such as apples, berries or bananas.



Citrus Salsa

This is great for eating with chips, in burritos, or served over fish or chicken.

Ingredients

- 2 Grapefruit
- 1 Tomato, chopped fine
- 1 C. Pepper (any color), diced
- 1 Jalapeño Pepper, seeded and minced
- 3 Tbsp. Red Onion, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. Cilantro, chopped (optional)
- Salt to taste

Note: Salsas lend themselves to experimentation and improvisation. No pepper/tomato? Add more citrus. Not a big fan of spice? Leave out the jalapeño. Think it needs more onion? Go for it!



Preparation

To begin, trim off the very top and bottom of the fruit with a sharp knife. Set it on end, and cut the peel and pith from the fruit. Begin at the top and follow the curve of the fruit down. Then, carefully cut out each section of the fruit by inserting the blade of the knife between the juicy goodness and the membrane on both sides. The wedges should come out easily, leaving only the membrane intact. Don't throw it away the membranes! This technique for preparing citrus is called "supreming."

After supreming the grapefruit, dice the sections. Combine with other ingredients and mix well. Squeeze the juice from the leftover membranes, and pour it over the salsa. Let your salsa mellow in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before salting and serving.

Fresh Food Share Tips & Quips: Citrus Edition

Juicing lemons and limes: No citrus squeezer? No problem! You can improvise by twisting the citrus half around a fork. To help get even more juice, give the fruit a couple firm rolls along the counter top before cutting and squeezing.

Preserving citrus juice: If you've used half a lemon or lime and don't want to throw out the unused half, try freezing the juice. Simply pour the juice into a container or an ice cube tray. The next time you need lemon or lime juice just thaw to use.

Uses for citrus peels: Even leftovers peels have a lot to offer. Try baking lemon, lime or orange peels in the oven at 200 degrees until dry (remove as much as you can of the pith – white stuff – from the peels first) then add to tea while steeping, roasting veggies or meats, or even to your fireplace.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Transplant Propagation Class

Detroit Farm and Garden, 1759 21st St Detroit, 48216
Sunday, February 23rd from 1:00-3:00 pm

Brian from DFG will be teaching a class on transplant propagation. We will discuss the basics of seeds, soil mixes and a growing your own vegetable transplants. For gardeners looking to grow less common varieties or grow on a larger scale, this can be an important skill for taking your garden to the next level. This class is free as always.

Soul Food Dinner and Black History Month Celebration

O'Hair Park Community Association
Thursday, February 27th from 6:00-8:00 pm

The O'Hair Park Community Association will be having a special bi-monthly meeting. We will be celebrating Black History month by recognizing those members of the community who are our "living legacy": community

leaders/activists who have served the community and Detroit. There will be a catered Soul Food Dinner (\$5.00 donation) and cultural presentations to commemorate the occasion. For further information please inquire at 313-538-5835.

Detroit Soup in Highland Park

Nandi's Knowledge Café,
12511 Woodward, Highland Park, 48203
Sunday, March 9th

Doors @ 4:00 pm, proposals @ 5, dinner by 6, winners announced by 7! Attendees pay \$5 for soup & salad & vote on which project they think benefits the community the most. The winner goes home with all of the money raised at the door to carry out their project! At the dinner, residents & supporters connect, & share ideas & community resources. Each dinner also features a local artist!

The Green Ribbon Collaborative is a partnership between Gleaners Community Food Bank, Eastern Market Corporation, The Fair Food Network and The Greening of Detroit, fostering innovation and sustainable solutions to improve the community-based food system of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan through joint action of its member organizations and by working with other key stakeholders on a program or project basis.



To learn more about the Fresh Food Share, contact
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