

February 2023

Neuroscience Wellness Newsletter

Edited by Jessica Stroh and Denise Smith



February is Heart Month!

Each year on the first Friday in February, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, *The Heart Truth*[®] and others around the country celebrate National Wear Red Day[®] to bring greater attention to heart disease as a leading cause of death for Americans and steps people can take to protect their heart. Promote [Wear Red Day in your community with resources](#) such as printable stickers, posters, and social media graphics, including customizable ones.

Join us Friday, February 3 to get #OurHearts pumping!

Wear red and join *The Heart Truth*, the NIH Fitness Center, and NHLBI leaders for 25 minutes of heart-pumping activity! During this live event, Drs. Gary Gibbons, NHLBI director, and David Goff, director of NHLBI's Division of Cardiovascular Sciences, will join NIH Fitness Instructor Linda Bessacque and others around the country for a sampling of fun aerobic exercises. All fitness levels are welcome to participate.

Join here: <https://videocast.nih.gov>

WELLCASTS

Listen to the Build a Balanced Fitness Plan Wellcast [here](#).

Listen to the Psychological Flexibility Wellcast [here](#).

What parts of your self-care routine help your heart?

Self-care for your heart is really self-care for your whole self. You can improve and protect your health overall when you:

- ✓ Get a daily dose of [physical activity](#), such as a brisk, 30-minute walk.
- ✓ Cook meals that are low in sodium and unhealthy fats.
- ✓ Take your medications as prescribed and keep your medical appointments.
- ✓ Sleep 7-8 hours a night.
- ✓ Manage stress through, for example, meditation, yoga, a warm bath, or quiet time with a good book or funny movie.
- ✓ Try to reach or stay at a healthy weight by moving more and having snacks like fruits and veggies ready to grab when hunger hits.

How can you make self-care for your heart easier?

The trick is to plan ahead. Build heart-healthy activities into your daily self-care routine. Schedule things that are both good for you and important to you. You might want to set aside time to:

- ✓ Cook delicious, heart-healthy recipes. Choose some from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's delicious heart-healthy eating [website](#).
- ✓ Go for a bike ride, take an online exercise class, or have a family dance party.
- ✓ Make that doctor's appointment you've been putting off. Many providers now offer telehealth appointments to make accessing care easier.
- ✓ Organize your medications.

What's your health status?

Part of self-care is knowing your health status. Even during uncertain and busy times, get your blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels checked. Talk to your health care provider about your heart health.

#OurHearts eat healthier together

Get heart healthy for life by following the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan. It requires no special foods, provides daily and weekly nutritional goals, and can help lower high blood pressure.

Support your loved ones in their effort to stick to DASH by doing the following together:

- Pick out recipes to try.
- Make a grocery list.
- Cook heart-healthy versions of family favorites.
- Enjoy the meals you've prepared.

nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH



NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

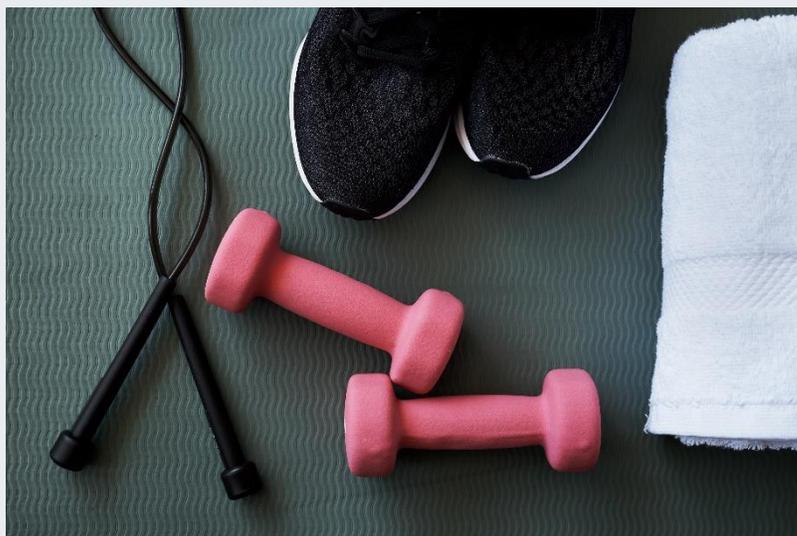


You and your healthcare provider: A heart-healthy partnership

Risk factors such as high blood pressure or cholesterol generally don't have obvious signs or symptoms. A crucial step in determining your risk is to see your provider for a thorough checkup and risk assessment. Your provider may use a risk calculator to estimate your risk of having a [heart attack](#), having a [stroke](#), or dying from a heart or blood vessel disease in the next 10 years or throughout your life.

For example, the [Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease \(ASCVD\) Estimator](#)[external link](#) considers your [cholesterol](#) levels, age, sex, race, and blood pressure. It also factors in whether you smoke or take medicines to manage your high blood pressure or cholesterol.

Your provider can be an important partner in helping you set and reach goals for heart health. Ask about your risk for heart disease at your annual checkup. Since your risk can change over time, keep asking each year.



Lifestyle Coaching



Are you or your coworkers looking to create some healthy habits in 2023, but don't know where to begin?

Health *Plus* provides free personal lifestyle coaching for VUMC faculty/staff and spouses. Lifestyle coaching can help you find the motivation and tools to reach your goals such as losing weight, being more physically active, eating better, quitting smoking, or lowering stress. Your coach will offer guidance, support, and accountability along the way. **Coaching is available by telephone, video call, or in-person during Health *Plus* [office hours](#).**

Begin the process by completing your annual [Health Assessment](#). Then

[Complete](#) this short form to make an appointment with a Lifestyle Coach.

Mindful Stretch Breaks

Mindful Stretch Breaks are moving into Team! You can now register for January's weekly sessions on [Health Plus's Mindful Stretch Break](#) page. Can't make it to the weekly session? Schedule a Mindful Stretch Break for your department. **Bonus:** We value your participation in Health *Plus* programs throughout the year. Participating in Mindful Stretch Breaks will count towards Go For the Gold!

SLOW COOKER ENCHILADA SOUP

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound boneless chicken breast
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 (10 ounce) can red enchilada sauce
- 1 (16 ounce) bag of frozen corn
- 1 (14 ounce) can of black beans, no-salt-added, rinsed
- 1 (14 ounce) can fire-roasted tomatoes, with juice
- 1 medium white onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1/2 teaspoons black pepper



DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients into slow cooker.
2. Stir to combine.
3. Cook on low for 6-8 hours or high 3-4 hours.
4. Use two forks to shred chicken.
5. If desired, top with cheese, avocado, jalapeño, Greek yogurt (in place of sour cream), and/or fresh cilantro.
6. If freezing, let cool completely and store in a freezer-safe container. Avoid filling the container to the top because liquid will expand during freezing.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING (1/6 of recipe)

Calories: 223, Total Fat: 3g, Saturated Fat: 1g, Sodium: 417mg, Carbohydrate 31g, Fiber: 8g, Added Sugar: 0g, Protein: 18g

SOURCE Brooke Butterworth, 2016-2017 Vanderbilt Dietetic Intern



Health Plus: Advancing healthy lifestyle practices.

FREEZABLE BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 white onion, diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 4 slices whole wheat bread, cubed
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 10 eggs
- 3 cups spinach, fresh
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup part-skim mozzarella cheese



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Sauté onion and peppers in olive oil.
3. Add spinach until wilted.
4. In a separate bowl, beat eggs. Add mustard, pepper, and veggie mixture.
5. In a greased 9x13 casserole dish, line bottom with bread.
6. Pour egg mixture over bread and top with cheese. Let sit or 1-2 hours or overnight in the fridge.
7. Bake for 40-45 minutes. Allow to cool completely before freezing.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING (1/8 of recipe)

Calories: 275, Total Fat: 3g, Saturated Fat: 1g, Carbohydrates: 52g,
Protein: 10g, Fiber: 7g, Sodium: 56 mg, Total Sugar: 21g, Added Sugar: 6g

SOURCE:

Adapted from Michelle Dudash, RDN



Health *Plus*: Advancing healthy lifestyle practices.