February is American Heart Month

Valentine’s Day is this month so love yourself and those around you by raising awareness to heart disease and educating your friends and family on ways to prevent this disease by keeping your “heart healthy”.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease. The good news? Heart disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions. Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to create opportunities for people to make healthier choices.

Make a difference in your community: Spread the word about strategies for preventing heart disease and encourage your community, family and friends to live heart healthy lives.

How can American Heart Month make a difference?
You can use this month to raise awareness about heart disease and how people can prevent it — both at home and in the community.

Here are just a few ideas:

• Encourage your family, friends and coworkers to make small changes, like using spices to season their food instead of salt.
• Educate kids about heart health and what they can do to create good habits early in their lives.
• Motivate the teachers and administrators in your area to make physical activity a part of the day.
• Ask the doctors and nurses to be leaders in your community by speaking out about ways to prevent heart disease.
Healthy Recipe Swap

Posole with Turkey and Heart-Shaped Chipotle Gorditas

INGREDIENTS

**Gorditas**
- 2/3 cup masa harina or cornmeal
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 1/2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 tsp minced seeded, canned chipotle chile in adobo sauce

**Cooking spray**

**Posole**
- 1 1/2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 3/4 pound turkey tenderloin, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 1 tbsp adobo sauce (from canned chipotle chile)
- 1 tsp all-purpose flour
- 1 (15.5-ounce) can white hominy, rinsed and drained
- 2 poblano chiles, seeded and chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 (16-ounce) cans fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth, divided

Preheat oven to 400°.

1. To prepare gorditas, combine first 4 ingredients. Stir in water, 1 1/2 tablespoons oil, and chipotle chile. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface; roll dough to a 1/4-inch thickness. Cut with a sharp (1 1/2-inch) heart-shaped cookie cutter into 12 gorditas. Place gorditas on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray; discard any remaining dough. Bake at 400° for 8 minutes. Reserve 6 gorditas for another use; refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

2. To prepare posole, heat 1 1/2 teaspoons oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; sauté 5 minutes. Combine turkey and 1 tablespoon adobo sauce, tossing well to coat. Add turkey mixture to pan; sauté 3 minutes. Combine 1/4 cup broth and 1 teaspoon flour. Add broth mixture, remaining broth, hominy, and poblano chiles to pan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 15 minutes. Remove 2 1/2 cups posole for another use; refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week, or freeze for up to 3 months.

3. Arrange 6 gorditas on top of posole in pan; cover and simmer 5 minutes. Spoon 1 1/4 cups posole into each of 2 bowls, and top each serving with 3 gorditas. Sprinkle with cilantro.
Love Yourself Wellness Challenge

**Week 1**
If red is the color of love then fall in love with “red” colored fruits and veggies this week. Document 5 items you consumed this week. Examples: strawberries, apples, raspberries, cherries, red grapes, red grapefruits, cranberries, blood oranges, pomegranates, watermelon, tomatoes, red peppers, red onions, beets, radishes, rhubarb, etc.

**Week 2**
Treat yourself to a little R&R. Download the Fit for a Healthier Generation Yoga Videos, practice yoga 2 times this week and get 6-8 hours of sleep at least 5 nights this week. Document what days of the week you achieved your goal.

**Week 3**
Purify your Heart by increasing your normal water consumption by drinking 3 extra eight oz. glasses of water for at least 5 days this week. Document what days of the week you achieved your goal.

**DAILY BONUS** - Say 1 affirmation to yourself daily for the entire 3 weeks (i.e., “I’m having a great hair day”, “Wow, my butt is looking pretty good today” “I’m doing a great job at work today”, “I cooked an amazing meal tonight,” etc.). This may be the hardest part of the challenge but remember to love yourself, you must take the time to praise yourself!
Healthy Tips: 15 Tips to Show Your Valentine You Care

This Valentine’s Day, indulge yourself and/or your sweetheart with a heart-healthy gift.

1. Rather than tempting your beloved with chocolates, consider a gift that has more permanence. Search for a poem that describes your feelings and write it on beautiful paper for a handmade Valentine.

2. **Quality time** is one of the most meaningful gifts. Bundle up and plan an active outing such as sledding, ice skating, gathering wood for a fire, or if you’re feeling adventurous, visit an indoor rock wall.

3. If your children are having a Valentine’s Day party at their school or day care, instead of sending candies, consider **mini-boxes of raisins**, mini-bags of pretzels, pencils or stickers as tokens of their friendly affection.

4. **Cooking at home** is an excellent way to control the quality and amounts of what you eat. Take a friend to a local cooking class to practice your skills or learn a new technique.

5. If you go to a restaurant to celebrate, **check out heart-healthy tips** for **dining out**.

6. Give to one another by **giving back**. Ask a family member, friend or date to volunteer with you at a local charity. **Giving back** is a healthy habit that will boost your mood and beat stress.

7. **Spice it up** – try cooking at home with healthier seasonings and avoid prepackaged mixes that may contain a lot of salt. Instead, add some spice with some fresh hot peppers.

8. **Sharing is caring** – if you do go out for a romantic dinner date, order one entrée to share. Many restaurant servings are enough for two – splitting will keep you from overdoing it.

9. Don’t forget to love Fido, too! Give your pet a Valentine and **remember to walk or exercise them daily** – getting active will benefit your health and your bond with your pets.

10. **Take it slow** – if you were gifted a luxurious box of chocolates from your sweetie stick it in the fridge or freezer and enjoy in moderation over several weeks.

11. Still seeing hearts? You’ve seen hearts all month long; look for them at the grocery store and select **products with the heart-check mark**. These items are low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

12. **Take a walk** – walking is free, and costs nothing to get started. Walking for as little as 30 minutes a day provides heart-health benefits.

13. **Try something new** – dare yourself to try a new fruit or vegetable. Next time you’re at the store pick up something you’ve never made before.

14. **Stay hydrated** – staying properly hydrated helps you feel (and look) better and water is a great alternative to high-calorie, sugar-sweetened drinks. Treat yourself to a fun new water bottle to encourage the habit – if it’s always handy, you’re more likely to drink up.

15. **Make a change** – pick one small thing you can change about your daily diet – start buying skim milk, order the nonfat latte, skip the afternoon vending machine visit or add an extra veggie to your dinner plate.