

February 2016

National Heart Month



#### Did you know?

- ♥ Heart Disease kills more women than breast cancer.
- ♥ Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women in the United States, killing more women than all forms of cancer combined.
- ♥ One in three women die of heart disease, while one in 31 die of breast cancer.

EAT well.

MOVE often.

SLEEP lots.

LOVE your  
body.

REPEAT for  
life.

# Wellness Corner Connection

Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO

## Let's Get To The Heart of The Matter



It has become standard practice in our efforts to bring wellness to the workplace to address one of the leading killers in our nation—Heart Disease. And February has become symbolic with remembering our heart through the celebration of Valentine's Day and the recognition of National Heart Health Month. There's no better way to show love but to love yourself and take care of your own heart. Most of us are familiar with the common symptoms of a heart attack. But you may not be aware that they vary between men and women. Being aware of this could mean the difference between life and death.

### First some facts: Heart Disease In the United States

Heart disease, such as coronary heart disease, heart attack, congestive heart failure, and congenital heart disease, is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S. Each year, heart disease is at the top of the list of the country's most serious health problems. In fact, statistics show that cardiovascular disease is America's leading health problem, and the leading cause of death. Let's look at some statistics:

- ♥ About 610,000 people die of heart disease in the United States every year—that's 1 in every 4 deaths!
- ♥ Every year about 735,000 Americans have a heart attack. Of these, 525,000 are a first heart attack and 210,000 happen in people who already had a heart attack.
- ♥ Heart disease deaths vary by race and ethnicity and by geographic locations. African Americans, Hispanics and whites are at highest risk. Deaths are highest among people living in the South. (much of this has to do with food options available to these folks and the choices they end up making)

### Symptoms Differ Between Men and Women

Women and men share many heart disease risk factors, but recent studies are showing what previous male-focused studies have not shown: Women also have their own unique heart disease risk factors.

#### Traditional risk factors common to both women and men:

- Obesity
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Family history
- Metabolic syndrome – the co-existence of high blood pressure, obesity, and high glucose and triglyceride levels
- High levels of C-reactive protein – a sign of inflammatory disease that can occur along with other cardiovascular risk factors



#### Some risk factors that relate specifically to women or that can affect women disproportionately include:

- Relatively high testosterone levels prior to menopause
- Increasing hypertension during menopause
- Autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis – more common in women than in men
- Stress and depression – also more common among women
- Low risk factor awareness – Lack of recognition of many of the above conditions as risk factors for heart disease is a risk factor in itself

Because women don't recognize their heart attack symptoms, they may not seek needed medical care. This delay in care contributes to higher mortality rates experienced by women, particularly younger women, according to Dr. Gregg Fonarow, professor of cardiology at the University of California.

Dr. Laxmi Mehta, director of the Women's Cardiovascular Health Program at Ohio State University Medical Center published this statement in the American Heart Association journal called *Circulation*. **Here are a few of the highlights:**

- Plaque buildup in the arteries -- a frequent cause of heart attack -- can differ between the sexes. Women are less likely to need stenting to open a blocked artery, but they still suffer blood vessel damage that reduces blood flow to the heart, causing a heart attack.
- High blood pressure is a stronger risk factor for women than for men. And diabetes raises a young woman's heart disease risk up to five times higher compared to young men.
- Guideline-recommended medications are underused in women, compared to men, and women are referred less often for cardiac rehabilitation. When they are referred, they are less likely than men to go or to finish it.
- For men and women, chest pain or discomfort is the most common heart attack symptom, **but women are more likely to report shortness of breath, back or jaw pain, and nausea and vomiting.**
- Black women of any age have a higher incidence of heart attacks than white women. And black and Hispanic women have more risk factors such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure at the time of heart attack compared to white women.



Sources: WebMD and CDC

**Taking care of your health today gives  
you a better chance at tomorrow.  
Don't wait!**



## 5 Medication-free Strategies to Help Prevent Heart Disease

By Mayo Clinic

Heart disease may be a leading cause of death, but that doesn't mean you have to accept it as your fate. Although you lack the power to change some risk factors — such as family history, sex or age — there are some key heart disease prevention steps you can take. You can avoid heart problems in the future by adopting a healthy lifestyle today. Here are five heart disease prevention tips to get you started. Try to tackle one at a time and make it part of your life!

### Don't smoke or use tobacco

Smoking or using tobacco is one of the most significant risk factors for developing heart disease. Chemicals in tobacco can damage your heart and blood vessels, leading to narrowing of the arteries (atherosclerosis). Atherosclerosis can ultimately lead to a heart attack. When it comes to heart disease prevention, no amount of smoking is safe. Smokeless tobacco and low-tar and low-nicotine cigarettes also are risky, as is exposure to secondhand smoke.



In addition, the nicotine in cigarette smoke makes your heart work harder by narrowing your blood vessels and increasing your heart rate and blood pressure. Carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke replaces some of the oxygen in your blood. This increases your blood pressure by **forcing your heart to work harder** to supply enough oxygen. Even so-called "social smoking" is dangerous and increases the risk of heart disease. The good news, though, is that **when you quit smoking, your risk of heart disease drops dramatically within just one year**. And no matter how long or how much you smoked, you'll start reaping rewards as soon as you quit.

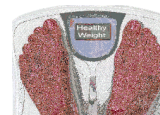
### Exercise for 30 minutes on most days of the week

Getting some regular, daily exercise can reduce your risk of fatal heart disease. Physical activity helps you control your weight and can reduce your chances of developing other conditions that may put a strain on your heart, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. It also reduces stress, which may be a factor in heart disease. Try getting at least 30 to 60 minutes of moderately intense physical activity most days of the week. **However, even shorter amounts of exercise offer heart benefits**, so if you can't meet those guidelines, don't give up. You can even break up your workout time into 10-minute sessions.



### Maintain a healthy weight

As you put on weight in adulthood, your weight gain is mostly fat rather than muscle. This excess weight can lead to conditions that increase your chances of heart disease — high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.



### Eat a heart-healthy diet

Eating a special diet called the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan can help protect your heart. Following the DASH diet means eating foods that are low in fat, cholesterol and salt. The diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products, which can help protect your heart. Beans, other low-fat sources of protein and certain types of fish also can reduce your risk of heart disease.



### Get regular health screenings

High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage your heart and blood vessels. But without testing for them, you probably won't know whether you have these conditions. Regular screening can tell you what your numbers are and whether you need to take action.

**Do you know  
YOUR numbers?**



Do you know the heart health numbers that could literally save your life? There are three key numbers you need -- including one surprisingly easy one that could give you a lifesaving preview of your cardiac risk.

1. Your blood pressure
2. Your cholesterol levels
3. Your waist size

Don't wait until it's raining to get the roof fixed!!! Make the effort to get your screenings now. Check with your physical to determine what is "normal" for YOU.

For more details on the ranges in which these numbers should be, visit:  
<http://www.webmd.com/heart/features/do-you-know-your-heart-numbers>

### Take Aspirin at Bedtime to Better Protect Heart?

*WebMD Medical Reference*

A daily low-dose aspirin has become a common treatment for people at high risk for heart attacks or strokes because it thins the blood and prevents clotting. *But when you take it could matter.* Since 1980, it's been known that cardiovascular events such as platelet activity happen more often in the morning.

Aspirin reduces this activity, thus reducing chances these platelets will clot. But as long as you take it (as prescribed by your cardiologist) is really the most important thing to remember.

You can take aspirin to help you during a heart attack. After you call 911 or other emergency services, chew 1 adult-strength aspirin (325 mg) if you are not allergic to aspirin and if there is no other reason that you can't take aspirin. Aspirin slows blood clotting, so a blood clot that is causing the heart attack stays smaller. Always check with your physician first.

Read more on this topic at:

<http://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/tc/low-dose-aspirin-therapy-topic-overview>

## Food...Real or “Want-to-Be” (aka Processed)?

"THE FOOD YOU EAT  
CAN BE EITHER  
THE SAFEST  
&  
MOST POWERFUL  
FORM OF MEDICINE  
or  
THE SLOWEST  
FORM OF POISON."

Have you been struggling with your weight? Do you feel getting the extra pounds off and keeping them off is a battle you will never win? Instead of taking a look in the mirror, I want you to take a look at your plate. What are you eating...and be honest with yourself!!

If it's mostly processed foods, you are among the majority of the population who consume high amounts of it. This "Western" diet is the main reason people all over the world are getting fat and sick! And it's not your fault. However, it is your choice and you do have the power to decide...what do YOU want to put into your body?

Let's take a quick look at what Processed food really is. Most foods are "processed". Apples are cut from trees, ground beef has been ground in a machine, butter is cream that has been separated from the milk and churned. However, when that food has been *chemically* (vs. mechanically) processed, it's made solely from refined ingredients and artificial substances, stuff that your body cannot use.

**They are loaded with added sugar** (and it's evil twin, High Fructose Corn Syrup), which is strongly associated with some of the world's leading killers....heart disease, diabetes, obesity and cancer. **They are "hyper rewarding"** meaning the combination of sweet, salty and fatty, make them irresistible to our taste buds. And the food manufacturers know this! They are all competing to make their product more desirable than the other...not in a healthy way!!! Many processed foods are engineered in such a way that they overpower our bodies "common sense" to stop before overconsumption takes place. They are loaded with:



**Preservatives:** Chemicals that prevent the food from rotting. Think about it...processed foods can last on the shelf for YEARS!!! Instead: Eat food that will rot!

**Colorants:** Chemicals that are used to give the food a specific color. Instead: Eat food that is naturally green or red or orange!

**Flavor:** Chemicals that give the food a particular flavor. Instead: Season your fresh vegetables with herbs!

**Texturants:** Chemicals that give a particular texture. Instead: Enjoy real food for what it is!!

Many people can literally **become addicted to processed junk foods** and completely lose control over their consumption. They've had their brain biochemically hijacked by the intense dopamine release that occurs in the brain when they eat these foods (much like drugs do to a cocaine addict).

**Processed foods are high in carbohydrates.** Some folks think the majority of their energy intake should be from carbs, while others think they should be avoided like the plague. But it's all about the **type** of carbohydrates you consume: whole or refined. Refined or simple carbohydrates are quickly broken down in the digestive tract, leading to rapid spikes in blood sugar and insulin levels. This can lead to cravings in a few hours when the blood sugar level starts to come down. Processed foods are usually refined carbs. No surprise, right?

Processed foods are **extremely low in essential nutrients!** That's why you'll see packages that say "fortified with vitamins", "Rich in fiber", "whole grains". Beware!!! The food manufacturers are just trying to make you feel better about eating it. Real food such as plants, fruits and lean meats don't need to advertise these things...it's a given!!

**So my message to you is TAKE BACK CONTROL of your life as it relates to nutrition.** We are all busy. But if we just take a little time to plan our meals and think about what we are putting into our bodies, the struggle to maintain a healthy weight could become a whole lot easier!

**Don't let the food manufactures dictate what you eat. They are NOT looking out for your health. They are looking to make money!**

### Keep these things in mind the next time you are at a cross road

#### to making a food choice:

- ◆ Don't eat anything your great grandmother wouldn't recognize as food. When you pick up something that has 15 ingredients listed that you can't even pronounce, ask yourself, "what are those things doing there?"
- ◆ Don't eat anything with more than five ingredients, or ingredients you can't pronounce.
- ◆ Stay out of the middle aisles in the supermarket as much as possible.
- ◆ Don't eat anything that won't eventually rot.
- ◆ Always leave the table a little hungry. Try to stop eating before you feel full.
- ◆ Sit down and enjoy your meal. Take time and think about what you are eating. Savor the flavor of real food.
- ◆ Don't buy food where you buy your gasoline. In the U.S., 20% of food is eaten in the car.

♥  
EAT FOOD,  
NOT TOO MUCH,  
MOSTLY  
PLANTS.  
~ Michael Pollan

**You can do this!!**  
**Take back control.**  
**Your body is counting on you.**



## Getting Back to the **Heart** of the Matter

### NUTS about NUTS

The power food has over determine the path we take (healthy vs. unhealthy) is amazing. But what's even more powerful is our ability of choice. My motto is "all things in moderation". But I believe incorporating more healthy foods instead of unhealthy (those high in saturated fats, sugars, or sodium) will have a much more positive affect on the quality of life.

There are some foods that are especially beneficial to our health. Did you know that eating nuts may help increase your lifespan, lower your risk for cardiovascular disease and cancer, help in weight loss and are a benefit in diabetes management? Eating five or more servings of nuts per week is estimated to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by 35 percent. This appears to be at least in part due to prevention of sudden cardiac death and in part due to cholesterol-lowering; other factors that may contribute include improved blood vessel function and reduced inflammation and oxidative stress.

Nuts also provoke a minimal glycemic response, which helps to limit blood glucose and insulin after a meal, in turn helping to prevent insulin resistance and diabetes. Almonds, for example, have been found to decrease glycemic and insulin response of a carbohydrate-rich meal while reducing oxidative stress on cells.

There is also substantial evidence that nuts protect against cancer, not just from their own salient features, but also because their fats enhance the absorption of anti-cancer phytochemicals from other foods.



The Physicians' Health Study examined more than 15,000 men without heart disease for a period of 12 years. Those who ate at least two-and-a-half servings of vegetables each day cut their risk of heart disease by about 25%, compared with those who didn't eat the veggies. Each additional serving reduced risk by another 17%.

### Slow and Steady Weight Loss for Heart Health

In men, a 40-inch (or larger) waistline may be dangerous for health and for women it's 35-inches (or larger). Losing belly fat is important, with slow weight loss offering the best results.

Do not deny yourself everything at once. Try gradually subtracting about 500 calories from your daily intake instead. This can be done with more moderate portion sizes and limiting added sugars and fats. It doesn't take much to see results; with a 5- to 10-percent drop in weight, overall health improves greatly!

### & other good stuff!!!!

#### Some of the Best Food for your heart (besides nuts):

**Oatmeal**—full of omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, folate and potassium. Lowers LDL cholesterol; keeps arteries clear.

**Salmon**—rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Reduces BP and keeps clotting at bay.

**Avocado**—packed with monounsaturated fat, lowers LDL levels and raises HDL levels.

**Berries**—full of anti-inflammatories which reduce risk of heart disease and cancer.

**Legumes (beans)**—full of fiber, packed with omega-3 fatty acids and calcium.

**Flaxseed**—full of fiber and omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. A little sprinkle can go long way for your heart.

Resource: [www.health.com](http://www.health.com)

### Recipe Corner

### Slow Cooker Vegetable Lasagna (taken from Eatingwell.com)

Sure, the slow cooker's great for stews and soups, but it also happens to make a mean lasagna! In this ingenious slow-cooker recipe, all you have to do is chop your veggies, then layer the ingredients (raw) into the crock pot. Serve with: Garlic bread and a green salad. Can't get any easier than

#### Ingredients:

- 1 large egg
- 1 15- to 16-ounce container part-skim ricotta
- 1 5-ounce package baby spinach, coarsely chopped
- 3 large or 4 small Portobello mushroom caps, gills removed (see Tip), halved and thinly sliced
- 1 small zucchini, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Pinch of crushed red pepper (optional)
- 15 whole-wheat lasagna noodles (about 12 ounces), uncooked
- 3 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella, divided

#### Preparation

1. Combine egg, ricotta, spinach, mushrooms and zucchini in a large bowl.
2. Combine crushed and diced tomatoes and their juice, garlic and crushed red pepper (if using) in a medium bowl.
3. Generously coat a 6-quart or larger slow cooker with cooking spray. Spread 1 1/2 cups of the tomato mixture in the slow cooker. Arrange 5 noodles over the sauce, overlapping them slightly and breaking into pieces to cover as much of the sauce as possible. Spread half of the ricotta-vegetable mixture over the noodles and firmly pat down, then spoon on 1 1/2 cups sauce and sprinkle with 1 cup mozzarella. Repeat the layering one more time, starting with noodles. Top with a third layer of noodles. Evenly spread the remaining tomato sauce over the noodles. Set aside the remaining 1 cup mozzarella in the refrigerator.
4. Put the lid on the slow cooker and cook on High for 2 hours or on Low for 4 hours. Turn off the slow cooker, sprinkle the reserved mozzarella on the lasagna, cover and let stand for 10 minutes to melt the cheese.



**Nutrition:** Per serving: 414 calories; 14 g fat (8 g sat, 4 g mono); 63 mg cholesterol; 48 g carbohydrates; 0 g added sugars; 28 g protein; 7 g fiber; 641 mg sodium; 829 mg potassium. **Nutrition Bonus:** Calcium & Vitamin A (56% daily value), Vitamin C (39% dv), Iron & Magnesium (26% dv), Zinc (25% dv), Potassium (24% dv), Folate (18% dv).

**Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO JIF**

Home Office: 856-322-1220

Cell: 856-520-9908

*Don't strive for perfection...strive for progress!*