



## *Eating well* can help improve mental sharpness, boost energy levels, and increase resistance to illness

It's that time of year. Promises are being made to lose weight, or quit smoking, or exercise more. We try to toss away any number of bad habits and resolve to better ourselves. Everyone knows that healthy eating is important, but it becomes even more so as we head into middle age and beyond.

No matter your age or your previous eating habits, it's not too late to change your diet and improve the way you think and feel. Healthy eating doesn't have to be about dieting and sacrifice. It should be all about enjoying fresh and tasty foods, along with wholesome ingredients that you enjoy.

***Eating well now can improve how you feel and can help you:***

**Sharpen your mind.** Studies show that people who eat fruits, leafy green vegetables, and certain fishes and nuts loaded with omega-3 fatty acids may be able to improve focus and decrease their risk of Alzheimer's disease, inflammation, cancer, and the progression of macular degeneration – a condition that leads to poor vision. Antioxidant-rich green tea may also enhance memory and mental alertness as you age.

**Feel better.** Whole food meals can give you more energy  
*continued on page 2*

and help you feel better, resulting in a boost to your mood and self-esteem. It's all connected—when your body feels good, you feel happier inside and out.

**Live longer and become stronger.** Good nutrition can help boost your immunity, fight toxins that cause illness, keep your weight in check, and reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type-2 diabetes, bone loss, and cancer.

The key to healthy eating is to focus on whole, minimally processed foods. This means sticking to food that is as close to its natural form as possible. Our bodies respond differently to different foods, so finding the healthy diet that works best for you may take some experimentation. Here's some tips on how to start:

**Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.** Break the apple and banana rut and go for color-rich selections like berries or melons. Aim for 2-3 servings a day. When it comes to vegetables, choose antioxidant-rich dark, leafy greens, such as kale, spinach, and broccoli as well as colorful vegetables such as carrots and squash. Try for 2-3 cups every day.

Found in fruits and vegetables, Vitamin C has antioxidant properties which are believed to help prevent cancer and heart disease. It's also involved in the production of collagen, which helps the skin and aids in healing wounds.

**Get enough Vitamin D.** Speaking of vitamins, Vitamin D is very important as it aids in the absorption of calcium in the body slowing down the rate at which bones lose calcium. New evidence shows that it may also protect against chronic conditions like multiple sclerosis, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and rheumatoid arthritis, and osteoporosis.

Some foods come fortified with it such as cereals, milk, yogurt, and juices. Naturally, Vitamin D is found in eggs, salmon, and tuna. A Vitamin D deficiency may increase your chances of falling. As always, consult with your physician in regards to adding vitamins and supplements to your diet.

**Get more calcium for bone health.** Maintaining bone health as you age also depends on adequate calcium intake to prevent osteoporosis and bone fractures. It's also been known to lower blood pressure. Good sources include milk, yogurt, cheese or non-dairy sources such as tofu, broccoli, almonds, and kale.

The World Health Organization recommends that people above the age of 50 consume 1200 mg of calcium daily. This translates to 4 cups of fortified orange juice, milk, soy, or almond milk.

**Go for “good fats” instead of “no fats.”** Omega-3 fatty acids are important for people of all ages including elderly people as they help prevent inflammation, cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, and heart disease. They can be found in fish such as sardines, tuna, mackerel, and salmon. They are also found in flaxseed, soybeans, canola oil, and walnuts. Supplements are also available, but be sure to consult your health provider before getting started.

**Vary your sources of protein.** Eating enough high-quality protein can improve your mood, boost your resistance to stress, anxiety, and depression, and even help you think more clearly. However, eating too much protein from processed meat products such as hot dogs, bacon, and salami may increase your risk of heart disease, cancer, and other health problems. Vary your sources of protein instead by including more fish, beans, peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds in your diet, and limiting red meat.

**Eat more fiber.** As we get older, our digestive system slows down. Dietary fiber can do so much more than keep you regular. It can lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, improve the health of your skin, and help you lose weight, so it's important to include enough fiber in your diet. Foods rich in fiber include nuts, wholegrain cereal, wholegrain bread and pasta, brown rice, brown bread, fruits, and vegetables.

**Choose complex carbohydrates.** Choose whole grains over processed white flour for more nutrients and fiber. This also cuts down on sugar and refined carbs. As we age, we retain the ability to distinguish sweet tastes the longest, leading many older people to consume more sugar and refined carbs than is healthy. Unlike complex carbs that are rich in fiber, refined or simple carbs (such as white rice, white flour, refined sugar) can lead to a dramatic spike in blood sugar, followed by a rapid crash which leaves you feeling hungry and prone to overeating.

Along with physical activity, a balanced diet can also contribute to enhanced independence as you age, and can also be a key to keeping a positive outlook and staying emotionally balanced. Food fuels our minds as well as our bodies. Happy New Year!

# February is American Heart Month

The purpose of American Heart Month to raise awareness, and unite millions of people with one common goal – the eradication of heart disease and stroke. It’s a tradition that’s over half a century strong. The first proclamation was issued by President Lyndon B. Johnson in February 1964, nine years after he had a heart attack.

Thanks to organizations such as The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, working together with the AHA and others, millions of people are enjoying longer, healthier lives. But despite all the progress, heart disease remains the single largest health threat to Americans — just as it was when LBJ was alive.

## Sudoku:

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes. This puzzle is SUPER TOUGH!

Visit [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com) for further tips and help about how to play – and good luck!

*Sudoku puzzle courtesy of [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com)*

	3					1		5
				2	5			
			6				8	
		3		8	7	2		
8		2				4		6
		7	9	6		3		
	6				8			
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9		5					1	

While science is advancing medicine in exciting new ways, unhealthy lifestyle choices combined with rising obesity rates in both kids and adults have hindered progress fighting heart disease. Cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke combined) kills about 2,300 a day. Obesity in young people and adults is at an all-time high, and people just ZIP codes apart can live 25 years less than their neighbors because of disparities in health. American Heart Month is vital for awareness, but the American Heart Association urges people to take care of their hearts year-round.

### The facts...

*heart.org*

**Heart disease kills more people** than all forms of cancer combined

**83%** believe that heart attacks can be prevented but aren't motivated to do anything

**72% of Americans** don't consider themselves at risk for heart disease

And **58%** put no effort into improving their heart health

The good news is that heart disease is preventable in most cases with healthy choices, which include not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar and cholesterol, treating high blood pressure, getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week, and getting regular checkups.

It's not too late to take preventive measures and lower your risk of developing heart disease and improve your overall health and well-being. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute encourages people to be healthy together. Motivation is greater, and personal goals are more easily met, when we join forces with others.

### Go Red for Women®

Go Red for Women® is the American Heart Association's global initiative to end heart disease and stroke in women. Launched in 2004, Go Red quickly expanded into a worldwide movement dedicated to removing the barriers women face to achieving good health and well-being.

The first Friday of the month, February 5, is National Wear Red Day. Coast to coast, landmarks, news anchors and neighborhoods will go red to raise awareness and support for heart disease. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, killing more women than all forms of cancer combined. To learn more about Go Red For Women® visit [goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org).



# Simply Delicious

## Easy Lentil Potato Soup

*A quick and simple to make, chunky, hearty and comforting meal, perfect for the cold weather. Nutritious lentils, rich in protein and fiber, combined with potatoes for a healthy and flavorful soup.*

**Yields:** 6 servings



### Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 1/4 cup diced onion
- 1 carrot, large 3 - 4 oz
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1/4 cup tomato sauce, *optional*
- 1 1/4 cups red lentils
- 12 oz potatoes cut into bite sized pieces
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp thyme
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 4-5 cups water

### Directions:

- Heat oil in a large pot or Dutch oven. Add onion and cook for 1 minute. Add garlic and carrots. Cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring frequently, to prevent burning.

- Add in the tomato paste, tomato sauce and lentils. Cook for 1 minute. Add potatoes. Pour 4 cups of water on top. Add salt, pepper, thyme and oregano. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer

for 25-35 minutes, until the lentils are cooked and potatoes are tender.

- Taste the soup and add more salt and pepper if needed. Serve warm.

### Recipe Notes:

Add up to 1 more cup of water, if you don't want the soup to be too thick. Instead for water, you can use vegetable or chicken stock (broth) for more flavor. You can add 1 bay leaf if you are a fan of the flavor.

## Dark Chocolate and Oat Clusters

*These healthy, 4-ingredient cookies are perfect for on-the-go snacks or for packing in a lunch bag. Dark chocolate is rich in heart-healthy antioxidants, oats are filled with fiber, and peanut butter gives you a delicious dose of protein.*

**Yields:** 4 servings; serving size 2 clusters

### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons 1% low-fat milk
- 1/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 3/4 cup old-fashioned rolled oats

### Directions:

- Place peanut butter, milk, and semisweet chocolate chips in a saucepan; cook over low heat until chips melt (about 3 minutes). Stir in oats; remove from heat. With a spoon or melon baller, drop 8 ball-shaped portions on a wax paper-lined baking sheet; let set in refrigerator 10 minutes before serving. *The Carb Lovers Diet*

