

# EAT WELL, AGE WELL. HEART HEALTH



February is all about the heart. We often think solely of Valentine's Day, but February is also National Heart Health Awareness Month. Heart health is an enormous concern in the United States. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. Therefore, we hear so much about heart health and see companies advertise "heart healthy" or "promotes heart health" on products. But how do we promote heart health in our daily lives? For starters we can reduce our sodium intake. The average American consumes 3,400 milligrams of sodium a day, while the daily value for sodium is less than 2,300 milligrams per day.

The best way to make sure you are choosing products low in sodium is to use the percent daily value (%DV) on food labels. Typically, a food over 20%DV is high in sodium and 5%DV is considered lower in sodium. It is also important to pay attention to serving sizes to find the total sodium consumed if you eat more than one serving size. Packaging on food products might also contain health claims related to sodium. Sodium-free products have less than 5 mg of sodium per serving and low sodium have 140 mg or less of sodium per serving. Lastly, reduced sodium is a product that contains at least 25% less sodium than the regular product. A diet high in sodium increase blood pressure (also known as hypertension). Blood pressure naturally rises as we age, so it is vital to decrease sodium intake as well. About 56% of U.S. adults have hypertension. One simple tip for reducing sodium is to use herbs, spices, and lemon juice as seasoning rather than salt. Cooking at home makes controlling sodium levels much easier. We can also improve are heart health by reducing our saturated and trans-fat. A simple way to do this is to select reduced-fat cheeses and select lean cuts of beef and pork. Omega-3 fatty acids are thought to help promote heart health. We can increase our intake by adding walnuts and eating fatty fish, such as salmon, lake trout, mackerel, sardines, and albacore tune, at least twice a week. Your heart is an incredibly important organ, so this February give your heart a hug by taking small steps to improve your heart health.

## WEEKLY CHALLENGES

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**EAT TWO SERVINGS  
OF FATTY FISH THIS  
WEEK**

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**REPLACE HIGH FAT  
CHEESE WITH A  
LOW-FAT OPTION**

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**GO ON A WALK  
THREE TIMES**

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**EAT A HANDFUL OF  
WALNUTS THIS  
WEEK**

## DID YOU KNOW?

**THE RECOMMENDED  
DAILY VALUE OF  
SODIUM (2,300  
MILLIGRAMS) IS ONLY  
EQUAL TO ONE  
TEASPOON!**

## Note to Nutrition Directors and Site Managers:

Thank you for helping to promote Eat Well, Age Well. Please encourage folks to form weekly action plans to help them incorporate nutrient dense foods into their eating habits. You can help create excitement to try new foods. They will find that they are really tasty and they will feel better if they add some of these foods to their diets.

If they ask how they should record if they reach their weekly action plan. They can write words like, "Nailed it" or just a short note like, added tomato juice at breakfast or added kale to my salad, etc.

### Week 1: Give out:

- The 1- page overview- handout ***Eat Well, Age Well. Heart Health.***
- Placemat/handout – ***Family Fun Month***
- Table Tent: ***Bake with a Family Member***
- Monthly Tracking Calendar for Weekly Challenges

### Week 2: Give out:

- Placemat/handout- ***Baked Salmon***
- Table Tent- ***National Almond Day- Feb. 16***

### Week 3: Give out:

- Placemat/handout- ***Healthy Cauliflower Rice***
- Table Tent- ***Whole Grain Barley***

### Week 4: Give out

- Placemat/handout- ***Mayo Free Avocado Tuna Salad***
- Table Tent- ***Pistachio Day***

**To print** the placemats on legal size paper, just hit print, they should be set up for that size of paper. To make them into a handout, go to Print and then go down to the last item that should say, 1 page per sheet, and click on the drop-down menu to select "Scale to Paper Size" and select "letter" size paper.

I appreciate your input and feedback so please feel free to call me at 608-228-8095 or email me with any comments [pam.vankampen@gwaar.org](mailto:pam.vankampen@gwaar.org)