

 **WELLNESS WEDNESDAY**

February is American Heart Month. According to the World Health Organization and the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease is the leading global cause of death. Fortunately, it is largely preventable by engaging in heart-healthy behaviors!

Did you know that a healthy, balanced diet is one of the best ways to protect your heart? It boosts your energy while helping you achieve a healthy weight as well as optimal blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Making heart-healthy food choices can be delicious and nutritious. These choices can be practiced while grocery shopping or eating at home, work, and anywhere else life takes you. A well-rounded eating pattern will help to protect both your health and your heart.

**Here are some heart-healthy tips for eating well:**

* Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, in any form (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried) without high-calorie sauces or added salt or sugar
* Eat mostly fiber-rich [whole grains](https://f.hubspotusercontent30.net/hubfs/226537/Marketing%20Emails/Free%20Employee%20Wellness%20Program/February%20-%20Heart%20Healthy%20Foods.pdf) (e.g., brown rice and oatmeal)
* Choose leanest cuts of meats when eating poultry
* Eat fish at least twice a week, focusing on varieties that contain omega-3 fatty acids (e.g., salmon and trout)
* Incorporate heart-healthy fats in moderation (e.g. nuts and avocados)
* Limit the intake of saturated and trans-fat (e.g., butter, palm oil, and partially hydrogenated oils) and replace them with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat (e.g., olive oil and walnuts)
* Limit food and beverages with added sugars
* Choose low sodium foods and prepare meals with little or no salt
* If alcohol is consumed, drink in moderation

An occasional drink may not be all bad, but excessive alcohol can lower the quality of your sleep, making you more tired the next day. Combined with sugar-sweetened beverages, you may experience a big post-sugar crash that can also decrease your energy. Making a one-time switch to water lets you evaluate how your energy levels are being impacted and may encourage you to switch more often! [Learn More](https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm)

Check out the additional flyers on Sodium and Fats from our dietary department!