



## **Monthly Strategy for February**

### **Heart Healthy Tips for Label Reading**

At first glance, the nutrition label and ingredient statement may seem overwhelming and too complicated to understand. The tips below are provided to help you use these tools to make healthier food choices.

#### **Identify sodium sources.**

- Aim to consume less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium (or about 1 teaspoon) each day.
- Look for snacks that contain less than 480 milligrams or more per serving.
- Let the “% Daily Value” be your guide: 5% or less is low, 20% or more is high.
- Watch for sodium or salt in the ingredient statement.
- Choose lower sodium version of items. Try V8 Low Sodium Vegetable Juice or Healthy Request Campbells soups or Dei Fratelli No Salt Added Whole Tomatoes. Mrs. Dash is an alternative to salt, but still provides delicious flavor.
- Enjoy foods that are naturally low in sodium, such as fruits and vegetables. For a quick side dish, microwave a package of the Birds Eye Steamfresh vegetables.

#### **Fill up on whole grains.**

- Strive to consume 20-30 grams of fiber each day.
- Look for items that contain at least 2.5 grams of fiber per serving.
- In the ingredient statement, look for: amaranth, barley, buckwheat, bulgur, corn, millet, oats, rice (brown), quinoa, rye, wheat and/or wild rice. These items are all whole grains.
- Choose fiber-rich foods throughout the day. The information below lists additional foods that are high in fiber.

#### **Choose foods with added health benefits.**

- Read product labels to determine the additional benefits of a product.
- Try Smart Balance® Light Buttery Spread with Flax Oil. In addition to being a spread, it contains 300 milligrams of Omega-3 (heart healthy fats) per serving.
- Reach for Barilla PLUS pastas. Not only are they great with spaghetti sauce, but they also contain additional fiber and Omega-3 fatty acids.

### **Fabulous Fiber!**

The average American only consumes about 11 grams of fiber each day. This number is half the amount of what is recommended. And increasing your fiber intake is easier than

you may think. Just keep in mind that when you increase your fiber intake to also increase your fluid intake.

The first place to start is to determine which foods are high in fiber. Excellent sources include: fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, such as oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, and bran cereals. The list below provides the average grams of fiber per serving for different foods:

Foods that contain 3 grams of fiber or more per serving:

Apple (with skin) – 1 medium  
Pear (with skin) – 1 medium  
Orange – 1 medium  
Baked Potato with Skin – 1 medium  
Raspberries – ½ cup  
Bran muffin – 1 medium  
Lima, kidney, pinto beans (cooked) – ½ cup

Foods that contain 1-2 grams of fiber per serving:

Banana – 1 medium  
Peach – 1 medium  
Strawberries – ½ cup  
Blueberries – ½ cup  
Raisins – ¼ cup  
Dried apricots – ¼ cup  
Spinach, raw – 1 cup  
Broccoli (cooked) – ½ cup  
Cauliflower (cooked) – ½ cup  
Peas (cooked) – ½ cup  
Carrot – 1 medium  
Whole wheat bread – 1 slice  
Quaker Oatmeal – ¾ cup  
Popcorn (air-popped) – 1 cup  
Whole wheat spaghetti – 1 cup  
Tomato – 1 medium

**Easy Ways to Increase Fiber**

- Have Campbell's Healthy Request Vegetable Soup for lunch
- Make a grilled cheese with 100% whole wheat bread and Smart Balance Reduced Fat Cheese Shreds
- Enjoy Quaker oatmeal or Kellogg's Smart Start Healthy Heart for breakfast
- Choose Smart Balance Light Butter popcorn or new Kashi TLC Chewy Cherry Dark Chocolate Granola bar for a snack

**Take the Heart Healthy Makeover Challenge**

Follow the recommendations below to lower your risk of heart disease:

- **Change full fat items to low-fat items.** You don't have to go completely fat-free, but just by choosing lower fat or light items you can save calories and fat grams.
- **Carry a bottle of water with you.** Plan to refill the bottle of water twice a day. This will help you keep track of the amount of fluid you are drinking each day.
- **Walk at least three hours a week.** Walking at least three hours a week may reduce your risk of heart disease by up to 40%! Push yourself even more to get more activity in. Check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- **Include omega-3 fatty acids.** Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of unsaturated fat that is important to include in our diets. These fatty acids may reduce the risk of blood clotting, decrease inflammation and lower triglyceride levels. Omega-3's are found in fish, such as salmon and tuna, and flaxseeds and walnuts. Some companies are even starting to include them in food products, such as Smart Balance spread and Kashi Honey Almond Flax granola bars.
- **Say tomato!** Fruits and vegetables are an easy way to get additional vitamins and minerals into your meals. Tomatoes are a great choice – either fresh or canned. Tomatoes contain lycopene that help protect the body against cancer. In addition, a recent study showed that men who had the highest amount of lycopene in their body fat were half as likely to suffer a heart attack as those with lesser amounts. Add slices of tomato to sandwiches or salads or toss Dei Fratelli chopped Italian tomatoes in with cooked pasta for an easy meal.
- **Add soy.** Soy foods come in a variety of forms including soymilk, soy nuts, tempeh, and tofu. Including soy in a heart healthy diet may help reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Use Silk soymilk in fruit smoothies, on top of your cereal or in a glass with meals. Enjoy soy nuts as a quick snack.
- **Limit trans fats.** Trans fatty acids are hydrogenated fats added to products to help with the taste and the shelf life of the food item. However, research shows that trans fats lower HDL (“good”) cholesterol levels while increasing LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels. Read nutrition labels on food products to help your reduce your intake.

### **Red Hot Gift Ideas for Your Valentine (and their heart)**

***Breakfast in Bed*** Surprise your sweetie with breakfast in bed! Make Quaker oatmeal (instant, quick oats or regular) with Silk soymilk and put sliced strawberries on top in the shape of a heart. Or pour Kellogg's Smart Start cereal in a heart-shaped bowl with low-fat milk. Include a glass of 100% orange juice or Campbell's V8 V-Fusion Light Strawberry Banana.

***Luscious Lunch*** Make a warm and delicious lunch for you and your valentine to share together. Heat up some Campbell's Healthy Request vegetable soup and serve with a grilled cheese or grilled Panini sandwich. Enjoy a sandwich made with 100% whole wheat bread, Smart Balance cheese and Smart Balance light buttery spread with flax oil. Add a slice of tomato, red onion, and spinach for additional flavor and vitamins.

**Movie Night** Watch your favorite movie together next to a fire in the fireplace. Pop Smart Balance popcorn for you and your sweetheart to share and top with sprinkles of Mrs. Dash seasonings instead of added salt. Enjoy with your favorite beverage.

**Local Park Passes** Perfect for the outdoor lover, look into getting passes for local parks in your area so that you can enjoy them when the weather warms up in the Spring, Summer and Fall.

**Get Active** Look for fun activities you can do together throughout the year. Pick out bikes and plan to discover adventurous bike paths around your area. Choose an exercise tape that you both enjoy. Give each other pedometers so you can track the amount of steps you take and encourage each other by walking around the neighborhood together each day.

**Scrapbook Accessories** Spend time building a scrapbook of your favorite memories. Include photos of when you first met, your first date and other important events in your relationship.

**Romantic Dinner for Two** Plan a candlelit dinner for two. Enjoy Barilla PLUS spaghetti topped with Dei Fratelli Tomato sauce. Serve with a side of BirdsEye Steamfresh cut green beans and a breadstick. For dessert, prepare dark chocolate covered strawberries.

*Go Red For Women is the American Heart Association's nationwide movement that celebrates the energy, passion and power we have as women to band together and fight heart disease, the No. 1 killer of American women. To find out how you can be involved in Go Red for Women, visit <http://www.goredforwomen.org>.*

Please consult your physician or healthcare provider with any health-related concerns, including changing your diet or starting an exercise routine. Information found at Meijer.com should never replace your doctor's advice or care.

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