

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

Give Your Heart the Love it Deserves!

February's abundance of valentines is a great reminder to show friends and family how much they are loved. But, do you show love to your own heart? It's an important question. Every cell, tissue and organ depend on the heart for oxygen and nutrients, making it the most important muscle you have.

Ignoring heart health can lead to heart disease and stroke, the leading cause of death for men and women. But, making small steps physically—and emotionally—can reduce the risk.

Work with your body

- Just 30 minutes of exercise several days a week can help your heart. Too hard to work in 30 minutes? Try to spread the time throughout the day by sitting less and moving more.
- A plate of vegetables, fruit, lean protein and healthy fats can be as tasty as it is healthy.
- Sleep is a cornerstone of health. Too little or too much can diminish heart health. Medical experts recommend 7½ to 8 hours of sleep a night.



- Taking a moment for three deep, focused breaths—slowly breathe in, slowly breathe out—helps reset the body/mind function and reduces stress.

Connect emotionally and spiritually

- It's a fact. Research shows that a higher sense of purpose can reduce your risk of heart problems by nearly 20 percent. This is a good month to reflect on your personal values and purpose in life.
- Human beings are social by nature, and contact with others is essential to good health. Strong relationships with family, friends and community groups are two-way streets. Supporting others increases a sense of purpose, meaning and self-esteem, and

reduces depression. Receiving support validates feelings, eases stress and reinforces a sense of belonging.

- The mind-body connection has been well documented. Emotions regulate the central nervous system and hormone system, which connect to the heart. Faith—belief in your Higher Power—can create a positive impact on the heart by increasing the mind-body connection.

Every moment of every day, your heart works to keep you going. Small, consistent efforts to give it attention physically and emotionally can become routine behavior that lead to a heart healthy lifestyle—and turn your heart into your best valentine.

Resources: WebMD.com; Heart.org

Health is the New Wealth

“If you have your health, you have everything.” This quote is display worthy because it’s easy to take health for granted until something happens. It could be just a cold, but what if it’s a call with bad news about test results? That is the moment you realize how important health is—and its impact on every part of your life. With longer life spans, it pays to invest in your health and improve your quality of life as you age.

Think of your wellness journey as a bank account with daily withdrawals from poor habits and deposits with good ones. Here are some examples that

can help you feel either poorer or richer in health.

Withdrawals

- Poor sleep
- Nutrient-deficient diet (fast and/or processed foods, sugary soft drinks)
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Isolation

Deposits

- A good night’s sleep
- A whole-food diet (vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein, healthy fats)
- Intentional movement throughout the day
- Time with your family, friends and community

Technology makes it easy to stay connected daily to healthy practices. You can even share your wellness journey with others on social media.

Florida Blue is here to help you make deposits into your wellness bank. Take advantage of free exercise classes and health presentations at your local Florida Blue Centers (floridablue.com/centers) and check out our Spotify “My Kind of Workout” playlist.

Make a deposit into your wellness bank today and every day to build a rich, healthy life.

Resource: floridablue.com/blog/health-is-the-new-wealth

Quinoa and Black Bean Salad



Quinoa and black beans are great plant sources of protein. When mixed together they make a quick, delicious meal that’s good for your heart.

Ingredients:

- ½ cup dry quinoa
- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 ½ tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon ground coriander (dried cilantro seeds)

- 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- 2 medium scallions, minced
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups tomato, chopped
- 1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 fresh green chilis (or to taste), minced
- Black pepper (to taste)

Directions

1. Rinse the quinoa in cold water. Boil water in a saucepan, then add the quinoa. Return to boil,

then simmer until the water is absorbed, 10 to 15 minutes. Cool for 15 minutes.

2. While quinoa is cooking, mix olive oil, lime juice, cumin, coriander, chopped cilantro, and scallions in a small bowl, and set aside.
3. Combine chopped vegetables with the black beans in a large bowl and set aside.
4. Once quinoa has cooled, combine all ingredients and mix well. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Recipe provided by the [National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute](#). [Click here](#) for nutritional information.

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