



February 2009

HCSF Newsletter

Love and hearts are in the air! Our February issue is all about families eating and staying heart healthy together. Check out the [Mythbusters](#) section and the recipe on the back for an easy family dinner, and our healthy [Valentine's Day](#) snack, below!



AMERICAN HEART MONTH

February is filled with hearts, and not just because of Valentine's Day. It is also Heart Health Month - a month dedicated to keeping your heart healthy. Read on to learn more about heart disease and what you can do to keep your ticker running smoothly!

Quick Facts:

- ♥ High cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, tobacco, and secondhand smoke are risk factors for heart disease.
- ♥ Heart disease affects young people as well as older adults.
- ♥ Heart disease can be prevented!

Heart Healthy Habits- A healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons you have to fight heart disease.

- ♥ Get your heart (and the rest of you) moving! Adults should be physically active at least 30 minutes most days of the week and children should be active for 60 minutes most days of the week. So get the whole family moving with indoor tag, Dance, Dance Revolution, Wii Fit games that get your heart rate up or a brisk walk after dinner.

Love your diet:

- ♥ Select fat-free, 1% fat and low-fat dairy products.
- ♥ Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added fat (bake, broil or grill).
- ♥ Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- ♥ Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt – aim to eat less than 2300mg of sodium per day.



Try this recipe for a healthy Valentine's Day snack!



POPCORN-BANANA MUNCH MIX

Makes 5-6 cups

Ingredients:

- 2 cups regular-flavored air popped popcorn
- ½-1 cup banana chips, broken into small pieces (or other dried fruit like raisins or apricots)
- 1 cup dry-roasted peanuts
- ½-1 cup sweetened, dried cranberries



Directions: Measure all ingredients into a big bowl, mix and enjoy!

Note to Parents: Popcorn can be a choking hazard for children under three.

Mythbusters

Myth: Eating together as a family doesn't matter. As long as the kids are getting fed that's all that's important.

Truth: Not so fast! While the fast pace of modern family life may not allow you to sit down together for dinner every night, it is worth it to make an effort to make it a habit to eat together as a family.

Benefits of eating family meals: Family mealtimes provide an opportunity for you to check in with each other and share what is going on in your lives. Rituals, like family meals, that you put in place when the kids are little will make it easier to keep lines of communication open even as the kids get older. Family meals also create memories that will last a lifetime..."do you remember when sister laughed so hard at Dad's story that milk came out her nose??"

Shared mealtimes can also make your life easier – you make one meal, instead of playing short order cook.

You can also use family meals as an opportunity to expand your kids' world...one food at a time. Encourage your kids to try new foods. Try introducing new foods along side their favorites... and remember that it can take 8-10 tries of a new food before it is accepted, so be patient!



A few other notes:

Be realistic. Your toddler may have a pretty tough time sitting for a half hour at a meal. The important thing is to establish the routine of eating together at the table, even if it is only briefly.

Keep meals simple. Cook healthy and easy family meals and teach your kids how to cook them too! Even the smallest hands can help measure or stir. Added bonus - homemade meals are cheaper than eating out.

Plan ahead for the days when you don't feel like cooking. Cook a double batch of a meal, and then freeze the rest so that it can be reheated later on those nights when everyone is home, but you feel too tired to even think about lifting a pan. It will be easy to zap in the microwave... and dinner will be on the table in minutes.

5 ingredients,
15 minutes to
the table!

HOMEMADE HAMBURGER HELPER

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS:

- ✓ 1 lb ground beef, ground turkey or ground venison
- ✓ 1 bag frozen mixed vegetables
- ✓ 3 3-oz packages ramen noodles, saving 1 seasoning packet
- ✓ 1 tsp garlic powder
- ✓ 1 tsp onion powder



DIRECTIONS:

In a large pan over medium heat, cook ground meat. While the beef is cooking, boil Ramen noodles according to directions and drain. Once the beef is browned, drain and rinse it. Add ground meat back into pan with garlic and onion powder, frozen vegetables, noodles and seasoning packet and mix well. Add a few teaspoons of water if necessary to allow veggies to cook. Cover and turn heat to medium-low until vegetables are hot (about 10 minutes).