

# WALK THE TALK

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

February 2018



## A Grateful Heart Can Help Your Health!

Gratitude is more than a buzzword. It's a habit and practice that may actually change your perception of wellbeing.

Do you ever feel like you just can't catch a break? You know – the truck that cut you off, the meal that didn't turn out, the weird feedback you got from your boss? Do you sometimes feel negative and cynical about life?

Sure, we all do this a little, but doing it a lot can lead to depression<sup>1</sup>, which is linked to poor heart health, more inflammation, and even a weaker immune system.<sup>2</sup> **Yikes!**

Some neuroscience experts think our brains focus on negative information as a way to remember pain so we can avoid it in the future and stay safe. They call this the "negativity bias."<sup>3</sup>

**To balance out this natural tendency, we can practice gratitude.**

"Gratitude is good medicine," says Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at University of California-Davis and author of *The Little Book of Gratitude*.

"Clinical trials indicate that the practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person's life. It can lower blood pressure and improve immune function... grateful people engage in more exercise, have better dietary behaviors, are less likely to smoke and abuse alcohol, and have higher rates of medication adherence."

Dang, being grateful is the gift that seriously keeps on giving, right?

Here's a simple way to get started: Write these down before you go to bed or share them around the dinner table. In five minutes, you can practice gratitude from the HEART.

1. **HEALTH: What did your body do for you today?** Did you know you take about eight million breaths a year? Your feet can take you up a mountain, your arms can hold someone you love. Take a minute to marvel at the finely tuned machinery of your body.
2. **EAT: What did you feed your body to nourish yourself today?** Was it an old favorite, something you made, or something new and different? If you eat three meals a day, you'll eat about a thousand meals this year! Take a minute to savor an especially yummy meal.
3. **ACTIVITY: What did you do that really enjoyed today?** Did you give it your all at the gym or take a quiet moment while sitting in traffic to reflect? Take a minute to think back on one particularly awesome moment.
4. **RELATIONSHIP: Who do you look forward to seeing?** Is it someone who sets your heart on fire, always has a smile for you, has your back, or makes you laugh until you cry? Take a minute to smile as you think about this special person.
5. **TIME: What are you doing right now?** Every single day you wake up with 24 brand new hours. The past is history, the future is a mystery, and today is a gift. That's why they call it the present! Take a minute to be thankful for the gift of time.

Source: <https://healthyforgood.heart.org/bell/articles/thankfulness-how-gratitude-can-help-your-health>

# RECIPE OF THE MONTH

## Cherry Berry Smoothie

Source: [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)



February is Heart Month AND Cherry Month! This deliciously fruity smoothie celebrates both!

**Prep: 15 minutes**  
**Makes: 4 servings**

### Ingredients:

- 1½ cups fresh strawberries, hulled
- 1 cup pitted dark sweet cherries or 1 cup frozen unsweetened pitted dark sweet cherries (see Tip)
- 1 cup fresh raspberries
- 1 cup pomegranate juice, chilled
- ½ cup fresh blueberries

### Preparation:

1. In a blender combine strawberries, cherries, raspberries, pomegranate juice, and blueberries. Cover and blend until almost smooth.

Tip: If using fresh cherries, chill all the fruit; if using frozen cherries, they will make the smoothie cold.

## Did You Know?

One study showed added sugar was associated with a higher risk of dying from heart disease. Those who consumed 17 to 21% of calories from added sugar had a 38% higher risk of dying from cardiovascular disease compared to those who consumed 8% or fewer of calories from added sugar. The risk more than double for those consuming 21% or more of calories from added sugar.

**Life is Sweet... with these Easy Sugar Swaps!**

If you're cutting back on added sugars or calories, try these swaps to get the sweet taste you love:

- Desserts and Sweets:** Instead of indulging in a traditional sugar-based dessert, enjoy the natural sweetness of fruit. Fresh, frozen and canned (in its own juice or water) are all good choices. Try them baked, grilled, stewed or poached.
- Baking and Cooking:** Unsweetened applesauce can substitute for some of the sugar in a recipe. You may need less oil, too—adjust the recipe as needed to get the taste and texture you like. Or try using a no-calorie sweetener suitable for cooking and baking.
- Dressings and Sauces:** Swap store-bought bottled salad dressings, ketchup, tomato sauce and barbecue sauce—which can have a lot of added sugars—for homemade versions so you can control the amount of sugar added to them.
- Snack Mix and Granola:** Make your own, without all the added sugars. Combine your favorite nuts and seeds (unsalted or very lightly salted), raisins and dried fruits (unsweetened), rolled oats and whole-grain cereal (non-sugared/non-frosted)—and skip the candy!
- Soda/Soft Drinks:** Swap sugar-sweetened beverages for plain or sparkling water flavored with mint, citrus, cucumber or a splash of 100% fruit juice.
- Tea and Coffee:** Swap sugars (including honey and agave syrup) for a no-calorie sweetener. One packet adds about the same sweetness as two teaspoons of sugar—and typically saves you more than 25 calories.

Get recipes and more tips at [HEART.ORG/RECIPES](http://HEART.ORG/RECIPES)

The American Heart Association recommends cutting back on added sugars. Using low- and no-calorie sweeteners is one option that may help in an overall healthy diet. Foods and beverages containing low- and no-calorie sweeteners can be included in a healthy eating plan, as long as the calories they save are not added back as a reward or compensation. The FDA has determined that certain low- and no-calorie sweeteners, such as sucralose, are safe. It's important to eat an overall healthy dietary pattern that includes a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans and legumes, fish, skinless poultry, nuts and seeds, and fat-free/low-fat dairy products; and limits sodium, saturated fat, red meat and added sugars.

**Simple Cooking with Heart**

FOR MORE TIPS ON HEALTHY EATING, COOKING AND RECIPES: [HEART.ORG/SIMPLECOOKING](http://HEART.ORG/SIMPLECOOKING)

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Men should consume no more than about 150 calories a day, or nine teaspoons of added sugar. Women should consume no more than 100 calories, or six teaspoons.

Source: <http://news.heart.org/survey-sugar-is-bad-but-people-cant-stop-eating-it/>

## Invest in an Inclusive and Well Workplace!

# 01



### WHEELCHAIR INTERVAL CIRCUIT

#### DESK PUSH-UPS

Use your desk or a steady table to move your chest back and forth. See how many push-ups you can do in **60 seconds!**

#### ARM PUNCHES

Channel your inner boxer to finish off with arm punches. Do them forward, sideways, up in the air—just punch it out for **60 seconds!**

#### ARM CIRCLES

Find space where you can extend your arms out to the side to do arm circles. Do them big, small, backwards, forwards—just keep moving for **60 seconds!**

Perform these three exercises for 60 seconds then rest for 60 seconds and move on to the next exercise.

The entire circuit will total **5 minutes.**

### DO THIS CIRCUIT:

**2X** 

TWO TIMES A DAY

**5X** 

FIVE TIMES A WEEK

 **100**

TO BURN UP TO 100 CALORIES!

# 02



### CHAIR DIPS

Place your hands on your handles, armrests or wheels and try pushing yourself up and off your seat cushion for as many times as possible in **60 seconds.**

**5 minutes** a day of chair dips can help you burn up to **100 calories** a week!

ADULTS WITH DISABILITY ARE  
**3X MORE LIKELY**  
TO HAVE HEART DISEASE,  
STROKE, DIABETES OR CANCER.

  
NEARLY HALF OF ALL ADULTS  
**WITH DISABILITIES**  
GET NO AEROBIC PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

## DON'T BE A STATISTIC!

Does your 2018 roadmap ensure that everyone is able to benefit from and enjoy your health promotion efforts? As you kick off your health promotions for the year, consider actively planning for and including employees with disabilities. Source: <http://bit.ly/2nCKUTM>

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