

MEALS AND MORE



OBSERVANCES:

- Groundhog Day (Feb 2)
- Wear Red Day (Feb 3)
- World Cancer Day (Feb 4)
- National Pancake Day (Feb 13)
- Valentine's Day (Feb 14)
- President's Day (Feb 19)
- Leap Year Day (Feb 29)
- Black History Month
- American Heart Month
- National Cancer Prevention Month
- National Sweet Potato Month
- National Canned Food Month
- National Cherry Month

**FEBRUARY
2024**

“LIFE IS LIKE A BOX OF CHOCOLATES...”

you never know what you're going to get". And speaking of actual chocolates... what do you hope to get in that box? Milk or dark? Filled or plain? Caramel, coconut, or strawberry cream? The options are endless! The next time you reach for chocolate, sit down and savor it... meaning, let it melt in your mouth and really taste it. Enjoy chocolate as something special, like a gift. It's not a bad food, as you may have been told. And you're not bad for eating it. It just has different nutrients in it than vegetables do, for example, and probably won't make you feel the best if you eat too much of it. No food has moral value so it can't be good or bad (unless it's spoiled or stale!). And remember, any chocolate package that says "guilt-free" is false advertising. Guilt is not an ingredient and can't be added or taken away!

FEBRUARY IS HEART MONTH!

5 Tips To Help Lower Your Risk of Heart Disease

Risk: Inactivity – **Solution:** Move more throughout your day. Aim for at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week. Build up to activity that gets your heart beating faster and leaves you a little breathless. **Stay motivated:** Make walking dates. Do chair exercises while watching TV. Grab a loved one, turn on music and dance in your kitchen.

Risk: An unhealthy food intake – **Solution:** Ask yourself these questions before eating: Am I hungry right now or am I eating for another reason? Will this food taste good and will I be satisfied after eating it? How will I feel after eating this? **Stay motivated:** Invite friends to cook up heart healthy recipes together. Try the Meal Choice Menu at Meals On Wheels to receive different meals each week. Try a new fruit or vegetable offered at the senior food pantry. Eat lunch with others at one of our 15 dining centers.

Risk: Smoking, even occasionally – **Solution:** Quitting can be beneficial to your overall health, even

if you've smoked for years. Set a quit date and let those close to you know. If you've tried quitting in the past, consider what helped and what made it harder. **Stay motivated:** Ask your family and friends for support or join a support group. Find resources and connect with a trained counselor at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or smokefree.gov.

Risk: Inadequate or poor-quality sleep – **Solution:** Sleeping 7-8 hours each night helps improve heart health. Try going to bed and waking up at the same time each day. Getting a 30-minute daily dose of sunlight may also improve sleep. **Stay motivated:** Resist that late afternoon nap. Turn off all screens at a set time nightly. Relax by listening to music, reading, or taking a bath.

Risk: Uncontrolled stress – **Solution:** To help manage stress, try relaxation therapy, and increase physical activity. Talk to a qualified mental health provider or someone you trust. De-stressing may also help improve sleep. **Stay motivated:** Join a friend or family member in a relaxing activity like walking, yoga, or meditation every day.

Learn about heart health and heart healthy activities in your community at hlbi.nih.gov/ourhearts.



NUTRIENT OF THE MONTH: WATER

You can survive for weeks without food, but water? While some experts speculate up to a week, 3 or 4 days might be more accurate. Overall, about 60% of your body is water. Your brain and heart are about 73% water. Muscles and kidneys, about 79%. Your skin is made of about 64% water. Your lungs are about 83% water! It's critical to life and every organ function! Your body constantly loses water via sweating, urinating, and even breathing. Dehydration can occur more easily than you might imagine, and its repercussions can jeopardize your health and even become fatal. You may think you don't need to drink any during the winter months, but it's just as critical as in summer. How much water you require depends on numerous factors including age, gender, health status, and physical performance. Try to sip water throughout the day - even add fruit to it for more flavor. Enjoy hot (like in tea) or cold with ice!

SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS



How Family Caregivers Can Recharge During the Winter Months

1. Soak up as much sunlight as possible and find ways to go outside for some fresh air and a little bit of adventure!
2. When you're feeling stressed or pressured, take some time to retreat to your indoor oasis while reading a book, doing a craft or watching a movie.

3. This winter, start the next 12 months on the right foot by making time to schedule doctor's appointments for yourself.

4. You may feel healthier, happier, and more fulfilled if you get proactive about spending time with others, even just a phone call to a friend.

5. This winter, reaching out might mean bringing together your network of friends and family to help support your loved one. It might mean taking advantage of meal delivery, laundry pick-up, and other handy services in your area.

List Your Top Five Best Ways to Recharge:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

ANSWER KEY TO THE RIDDLES IN THE JANUARY MEALS AND MORE

1. What gets wet while drying? A TOWEL
2. What can you hold in your right hand, but never in your left hand? YOUR LEFT HAND
3. What can you catch, but not throw? A COLD
4. What kind of band never plays music? RUBBERBAND
5. What has many teeth, but cannot bite? A COMB
6. What has lots of eyes, but can't see? A POTATO
7. What has one eye, but can't see? A NEEDLE
8. What can travel all around the world without leaving its corner? A STAMP
9. What two things can you never eat for breakfast? LUNCH AND DINNER
10. What kind of room has no doors or windows? A MUSHROOM
11. What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common? THEIR MIDDLE NAME - THE

RECIPE: 4-Ingredient Sweet Potato Pancakes

<p>PREP TIME: 10 minutes</p>	<p>COOK TIME: 6 minutes</p>	<p>SERVING SIZE: Makes: 4 (3-inch pancakes) Serves: 1</p>
<p>INGREDIENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 medium sweet potato, baked and cooled (about 8 ounces of baked sweet potato) • 2 large eggs • 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt • Pinch of ground cinnamon, optional 	<p>DIRECTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Combine the sweet potato, eggs, salt, and cinnamon, if using, in a small blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Alternatively, you can stir the ingredients together in a small bowl with a spoon, but some sweet potato chunks may remain. Set the batter aside to rest while you heat the pan. 2. Heat an 8-inch nonstick or cast iron skillet over medium-high. Add 1/4 cup of the batter and cook for 3 minutes — this batter won't bubble up like traditional pancake batter. Gently flip the pancake with a thin spatula and cook for an additional 3 minutes on the second side. 3. Repeat with remaining batter and serve warm. <p>NOTES:</p> <p>This is great recipe to celebrate National Sweet Potato Month and National Pancake Day! https://www.thekitchn.com/sweet-potato-pancakes</p>	



For those of you receiving home delivered meals, ever wonder how to make them taste the best they can? Follow these tips!

FOR FROZEN MEALS: For best results, thaw in refrigerator overnight before heating.

MICROWAVE DIRECTIONS: Cut small slit in main compartment. Microwave on HIGH 2-3 minutes until hot. If frozen, microwave an additional 3-4 minutes. Remove film. Stir if needed. Scoop the meal onto your favorite plate, season as you prefer, and enjoy!

CONVENTIONAL OVEN DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Do not remove film. Heat meal 15-30 minutes until hot. If frozen, heat an additional 15-30 minutes. Remove film. Stir if needed. Scoop the meal onto your favorite plate, season as you prefer, and enjoy!

FOR COLD, READY-TO-EAT MEALS: Remove film. Scoop the meal onto your favorite plate, season as you prefer, and enjoy!



If you would like to know more about our home-delivered meals, pantry, or dining site programs, please call Meals On Wheels Western Michigan at 616-459-3111 or go to www.mealsonwheelswesternmichigan.org



Meals on Wheels Western Michigan is supported by:

