

FRESH News

February 2013

This month we celebrate love, friendship and heart health! American Heart Month takes place in February and with heart disease being the #1 cause of death in the United States, prevention through nutrition and physical activity must be emphasized. Use the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) as an opportunity to promote heart-healthy fruits and vegetables by educating students on the circulatory system and how foods help or hinder its functions. Theme ideas for February include serving all red/pink fruits and vegetables throughout the month (think pomegranates, cranberries, beets and tomatoes) or serving fruits and vegetables that specifically promote heart health due to their high vitamin, mineral and fiber content while being low in fat and calories (think apples, broccoli, raspberries and carrots). Physical activity also plays a role in heart health and should be encouraged. Check out the American Heart Association's *Healthier Kids* webpage for nutrition and physical activity resources by clicking [here](#). On Valentine's Day, consider serving a creative and fun FFVP snack. Look on page three of this newsletter for ideas.



Monthly Crunch

Strawberry



How to Select

- Strawberries should be firm and plump, with their green caps attached
- Choose strawberries that are deep red and shiny
- Avoid moldy and bruised strawberries

How to Store

- Strawberries are very perishable and will last in the refrigerator for no more than a few days
- Can be frozen for up to one year

Nutritional Benefits

- Excellent source of vitamin C
- Contains the antioxidant, polyphenol
- Good source of manganese and potassium
- Good source of fiber
- Low in calories and sodium-free

Red Bell Pepper



How to Select

- Choose peppers with deep, red color and taut skin
- Avoid peppers with soft spots and blemishes
- Select peppers with thick, green stems
- Peppers should be firm and heavy for their size

How to Store

- Store peppers in the refrigerator for 7-10 days
- Peppers are sensitive to moisture loss; include a damp cloth in the vegetable compartment
- Can be frozen if left whole and intact

Nutritional Benefits

- Excellent source of vitamins A and C
- Most nutrient dense of all the bell pepper varieties
- Contains the antioxidant, lycopene
- Low in calories and high in fiber

A BITE OF THE SEASON

Strawberry Caprese Pasta Salad

Ingredients

- 8 ounces strawberries
- 8 ounces whole-grain shell pasta, cooked, rinsed and cooled
- 8 ounces fresh, low-fat mozzarella balls
- ¼ cup fresh basil
- ¼ cup red onion, slivered
- ¼ cup low-fat balsamic vinaigrette

Preparation

- Remove the leaves and green caps, and quarter strawberries
- Combine strawberries, pasta, mozzarella, basil and onion in a large bowl
- Drizzle with vinaigrette and mix gently until ingredients are well coated



Yield

- 4-6 servings

*Find this recipe and others at <http://www.driscolls.com/>

Stuffed Red Bell Peppers

Ingredients

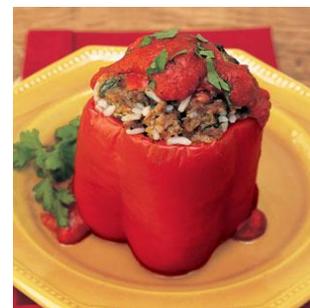
- 5 medium, red bell peppers
- 1 pound extra lean ground turkey
- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 3 cups spaghetti sauce
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove
- Salt & pepper (to taste)
- Italian seasoning (optional)
- ¼ cup low-fat mozzarella cheese

Yield

- 5 servings

Preparation

- Preheat oven to 325°F
- Remove tops and seeds off of fresh peppers
- Heat peppers in boiling water until they turn dull in color
- Brown meat with garlic, onion and seasonings
- Cook rice according to instructions on the container
- Mix rice, meat and 2 cups of the spaghetti sauce together
- Fill peppers with the mixture
- Pour remaining 1 cup of spaghetti sauce on top
- Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes
- Remove foil, sprinkle with cheese and bake an additional 10 minutes



*Find this recipe and others at <http://recipes.sparkpeople.com/>

Tasty FFVP Snack Ideas

Valentine's Day Fruit Kabobs

- Remove the skin from cantaloupe, watermelon and pineapple
- Slice the fruit into 1-inch thick sections
- Using a small, heart-shaped cookie cutter, punch out fruit
- Thread one of each fruit through a wooden kabob skewer



Healthy Hearts

- Cut baby carrots in half, at an angle, and stick ends together with low-fat, plain yogurt
- Remove leaves and green tops from strawberries
- Cut a "V" into each whole strawberry and then slice strawberry into 1/4-inch slivers
- Serve strawberries and carrots with a side of low-fat, plain yogurt on a small, disposable plate

Cupid's Arrows

- Remove the skin from watermelon and slice fruit into 1-inch thick sections
- Using a medium, heart-shaped cookie cutter, punch out fruit
- Slice orange into 1/4-inch thick wheels
- Divide oranges and slice some wheels in half and the other wheels into triangles
- Thread one orange triangle and one orange half with toothpicks and attach to each end of the watermelon heart



Tasty Tidbits

February is...

American Heart Month
Berry Fresh Month
Cherry Month
Grapefruit Month
Potato Lover's Month
Sweet Potato Month

National Food

Days in February:

17th - Cabbage Day



27th - Strawberry Day



Local Produce in February:

Fruits: Red Blush & White Grapefruit, Lemons, Canary Melon, Blood, Mandarin, Navel, Sweet, Temple & Valencia Oranges, Tangelos

Vegetables: Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Celery, Cauliflower, Cilantro, Greens, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuces, Green Onions, Radicchio, Radishes, Spinach, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes, Turnips



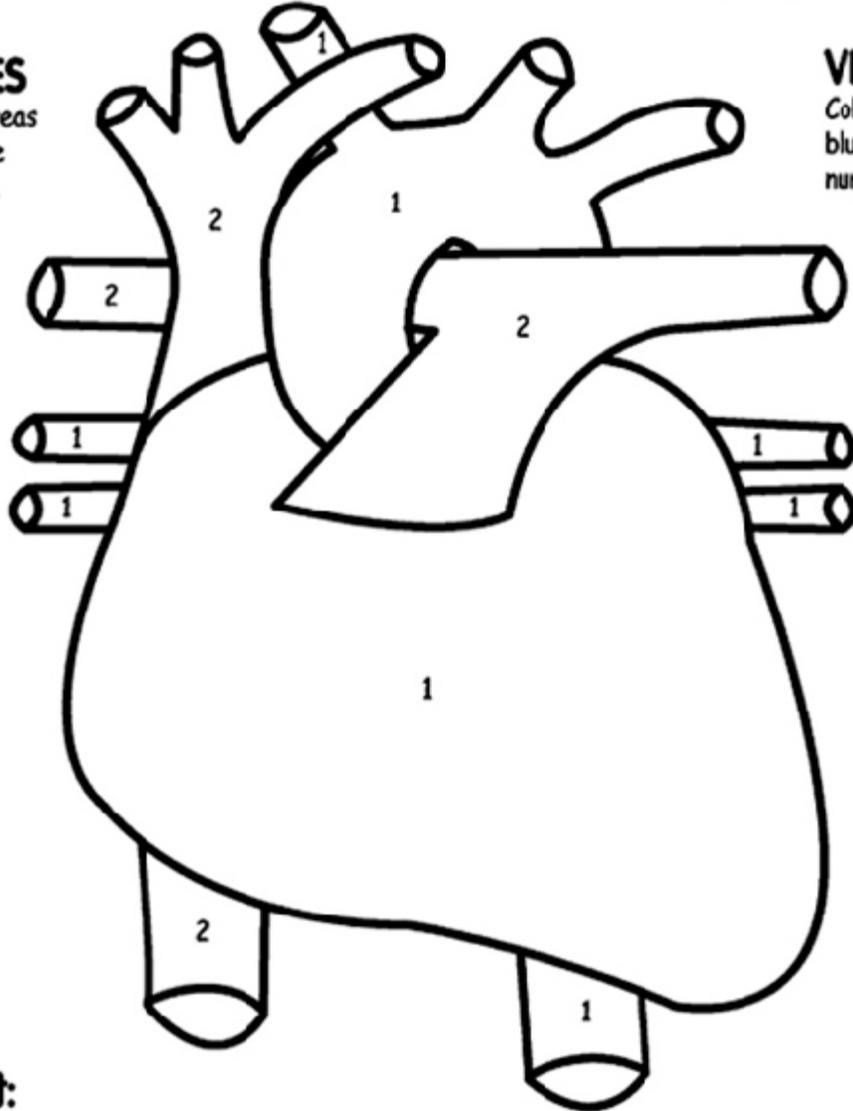
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HUMAN HEART

The human heart is made up of two different kinds of blood vessels. Blood vessels are hollow tubes that carry blood all over the human body. The human body has three kinds of vessels: arteries, veins and capillaries. In the human heart there are arteries and veins. Arteries carry blood away from the heart and veins carry blood toward the heart. Capillaries connect the arteries to the vein, throughout the body.

ARTERIES

Color the areas red that are numbered 1.



VEINS

Color the areas blue that are numbered 2.

Fun Fact:

If all the blood vessels were lined in a row from a child-sized body, they would form a line more than 60,000 miles long.