

## For a Healthy Heart: Know Your Nutrients

**FEBRUARY IS HEART DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH**, a great time to review nutrition facts.

What we know does matter, what we practice matters more. Putting our nutrition knowledge into practice can be a lifesaving move. There are many nutrients found in the foods we eat and drink, each of them with a specific job. Some things are good for our bodies and help them grow and work, while others are harmful. By knowing about the nutrients in the foods we eat and drink we can pick more healthy choices and less of those which are not.

### Protein

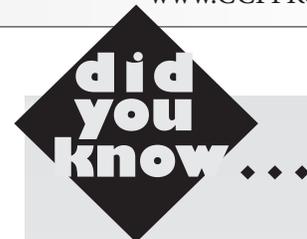
This nutrient is found in many foods, one of the most common is meat. Protein helps our body to build strong muscles. Without enough protein, our muscles begin to break down and get weak. Some good ways to get protein are by eating beans, nuts, lean meats, poultry without skin, fish, soy and low-fat dairy products.



### Carbohydrates

Carbs are found in almost every food we eat. They provide energy for all our activities. Some carbs are better than others. For example, some are found naturally in foods like fruit and milk. Also, the carbs found in fiber-rich grains, such as whole-grain breads, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, oatmeal and beans, keep our body energized for a long time. However, foods and beverages like cookies, candy and sodas have a lot of carbs from *sugar* and refined flour which gives us too many calories and contributes to weight gain and an increased risk of diabetes.

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- ▶ February is National Children's Dental Health Month.
- ▶ February 4<sup>th</sup> is National Homemade Soup Day.
- ▶ Cardiovascular diseases claim more lives than all forms of cancer combined.
- ▶ In the United States, someone has a heart attack every 34 seconds.
- ▶ Tooth decay is the number one chronic illness in children.
- ▶ Americans drink more than a billion glasses of tap water per day.
- ▶ Most tap water contains fluoride, a salt compound that helps prevent cavities.
- ▶ The CDC declared drinking water fluoridation as one of the top 10 public health achievements of the 20th century.

Sources: American Heart Association, Nutrition through the Seasons, American Dental Association, symptomfind.com, dosomething.org

### Quotable Quotes

“All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt.”

– Charles M. Schulz

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## For a Healthy Heart: Know Your Nutrients

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### Fats

Essential to give our bodies energy and support cell growth, fats also help protect our organs and help keep us warm. Fats help our body absorb some nutrients and produce important hormones, too. There are four dietary fats found in the foods we eat, saturated fats, trans fats, monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats.

### Saturated Fat

These are “bad” fats because they can increase the level of “bad” cholesterol in our blood and increase our risk of heart disease and stroke. Saturated fats are found in foods like whole and 2% fat milk, dairy products such as cheese, butter and cream, fatty meats, processed meats (bologna, salami) and poultry skin, as well as tropical oils such as palm, palm kernel and coconut oils.

### Trans Fat

Similarly, trans fats are “bad” fats because they can increase the level of “bad” cholesterol and decrease the level of “good” cholesterol in our blood and increase our risk of heart disease and stroke. Trans fats can be found in fried foods like French fries, doughnuts, baked goods including pastries, pie crusts, biscuits, pizza dough, cookies, crackers, margarine and shortening made with partially hydrogenated oils.

### Mono and Polyunsaturated Fats

These are “better” fats because they can help reduce “bad” cholesterol levels in our blood and lower our risk of heart disease and stroke. They are found in liquid vegetable oils such as olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, sunflower oil, soybean oil, corn oil and safflower oil, fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring and trout, avocados, peanut butter as well as many nuts and seeds.

### Sodium

Commonly known as salt (sodium chloride), sodium has an important job when it comes to food. It helps food stay safe when it is sitting in a can or a box in the pantry and helps it to taste better too. While sodium is important, our bodies need very little of it. Oftentimes the foods we buy have much more sodium than our bodies need. Some of the foods that usually contain a lot of sodium are restaurant and fast foods, packaged foods, processed foods, canned foods, soups, prepared mixes and condiments.

### Calcium

Found in many foods we eat and drink, one of calcium’s most important jobs is to help our bodies build strong bones. A good way to get calcium is by drinking fat-free and low-fat milk and eating low-fat dairy products. When our bones are strong, the rest of our body can get strong too!

### Potassium

Needed for the normal function of our body’s cells, potassium helps our body keep the right amount of water in our cells and other parts of the body. Potassium also helps our nerves and our muscles work well. A diet rich in potassium helps control blood pressure because potassium helps reduce the effect of sodium. Foods with potassium include bananas, cantaloupe, grapefruit, oranges, honeydew melon, spinach and potatoes.

### Fiber

A nutrient mostly found in plants and vegetables, fiber helps provide a feeling of fullness as well as getting rid of waste and cholesterol. When we don’t have enough fiber, our bodies struggle to get rid of all the waste. Foods that contain fiber include oatmeal, beans, strawberries and oranges.

For more information on heart-healthy eating, visit [www.Heart.org/Nutrition](http://www.Heart.org/Nutrition) or contact the American Heart Association at [inquiries@heart.org](mailto:inquiries@heart.org) or (800) 242-8721.

— Adapted from AHA My Nutrition Flash Cards

## Welcome to Heart Health Month



## KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

# Water is the Best Beverage for your Teeth

**IT DOESN'T MATTER** if your glass is half-empty or half-full—drinking water is always good for your health. Our bodies are made of 60% water; staying hydrated helps your system distribute healthy nutrients, gets rid of waste, gives your skin a healthy glow and keeps your muscles moving. Sipping water is also one of the best things you can do for your teeth—especially if it's fluoridated.

### Strengthens Your Teeth

Drinking water with fluoride (called “nature’s cavity fighter”) is one of the easiest and most beneficial things you can do to help prevent cavities.

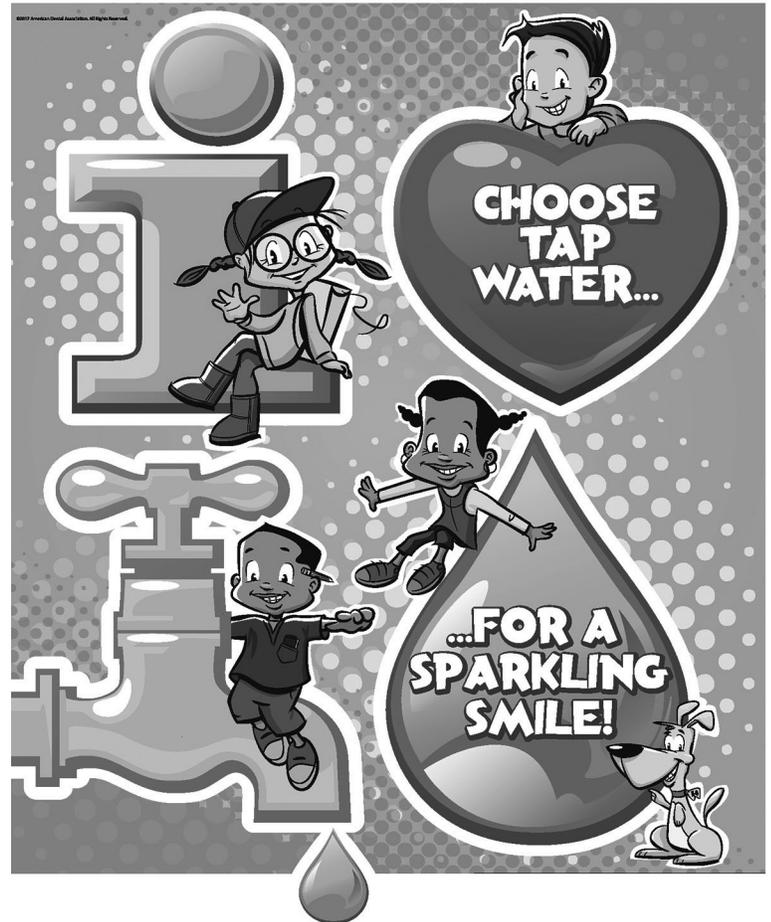
A modern-day tale of two cities shows what a difference fluoride makes in community water systems. In 2011, the Canadian city of Calgary stopped adding fluoride to its water. Curious about the impact, researchers compared Calgary second graders with kids in the same age group in Edmonton, a Canadian city that has had fluoridated water since 1967. Their research, published in the February 2016 journal *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, found children in Calgary had more tooth decay than children in Edmonton.

### Keeps Your Mouth Clean

Drinking juice, soda or sports drinks can leave unwanted sugar behind on your teeth. The cavity-causing bacteria in your mouth feed on sugar and produce acid that wears away enamel, which is the outer shell of your teeth. Many sweetened drinks also have added acids (phosphoric, citrus or malic acid) and those acids also eat away at your teeth. Water, however, cleans your mouth with every sip. It washes away leftover food and residue that cavity-causing bacteria are looking for. It also dilutes the acids produced by the bacteria in your mouth. You'll still need to brush twice a day for two minutes and clean between your teeth but drinking water through the day will help your smile be cavity-free.

### Fights Dry Mouth

Saliva is your mouth's first defense against tooth decay. It washes away leftover food, helps you swallow with ease and keeps your teeth strong by washing them with calcium,



phosphate and fluoride. If your saliva supply runs low, dry mouth may put you at risk for tooth decay. Drinking water can help cut your risk as you and your dentist work to find the best long-term solution.

### Calorie-Free

Sweetened drinks that are high in sugar and calories, create the perfect storm to put you at risk for cavities and other unhealthy consequences like weight gain. In fact, studies have shown that drinking water can actually help you lose weight. So the next time you need a drink, go guilt-free with water to take care of your body and your smile.

— American Dental Association

## Homemade Fideo Soup with Chicken

- Chicken breast halves, boneless, skinless .....6
- Water.....6 cups
- Onion, chopped.....1 small
- Garlic salt.....to taste
- Chicken bouillon .....1 Tbsp
- Small, thin noodles (fideo).....2 (7 ounce bags)
- Olive oil.....1 Tbsp
- Zucchini, quartered.....4 small
- Carrots, chopped .....2 cups
- Chayote, chopped .....1
- Tomato paste.....6 ounces

1. Boil chicken in water with onion, garlic salt and bouillon, until cooked through. Take chicken out and set aside to cool. When cool, shred the chicken by hand.
2. In a pan, fry the noodles in the oil until golden. Let them cool before adding them to the reserved broth. Bring to a boil.
3. Add the tomato paste and extra garlic salt if needed.
4. Add the zucchini, carrots and chayote to the stock and bring to a low-boil for about 30 minutes. Add chicken. Serve the soup warm with corn tortillas.

Yield: 12 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable, grains/breads and protein/meat alternate

— Bertha Gómez, family child care provider

## Apple and Cheddar Grilled Cheese

- Butter, softened.....2 Tbsp
- Bread.....8 slices
- Spicy brown mustard.....1 Tbsp
- Cheddar cheese, sliced .....8 ounces
- Granny Smith apple, unpeeled, sliced .....½ medium

1. Butter one side of the bread slices, then flip and spread the other sides with the mustard. Layer cheese and thin slices of apple between the bread slices (keeping the buttered sides on the outside).
2. Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Grill the sandwiches until golden brown and the cheese is melted, turning over once.

Yield: 4 servings

Meets requirement for grains/breads and protein/meat alternate

— momables.com

**Food Funny** Q: What do squirrels give for Valentine's Day?  
A: Forget-me-nuts.

## Activity Corner

### VALENTINE'S DAY FRUIT SALAD

Share the love this Valentine's Day with a lovely fruit salad!



Not only are strawberries the traditional color of Valentine's Day, but when you cut a strawberry in half, the halves are shaped like a heart.

Since the children may not have noticed that before, give them a plastic knife to cut them and make the discovery. Don't tell them what to expect, just let them know that when they cut the strawberry in half, they'll see a Valentine surprise.

Cut a watermelon into slices and give children heart-shaped cookie cutters to punch out sweet watermelon hearts to add to the berries.

Slice up some red apples, red Anjou or Bartlett pears and add some red grapes and pomegranate seeds to the festive fruit salad.

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