

## Top tips for heart health month

(Courtesy, Statepoint)

It's time to tend to matters of the heart, as February brings with it Valentine's Day and Heart Health Month. It's the perfect time for heart-healthy lifestyle choices that can help us enjoy longer lives with our loved ones.

Every 25 seconds somebody in America suffers from a coronary event such as heart attacks or strokes. And heart disease has long been the leading cause of death in the nation.

It was this harsh reality that spurred the government to proclaim February "American Heart Month" in 1963.

Today, the good news, according to the Centers for Disease Control, is the chance of developing coronary heart disease can be reduced by preventing and controlling factors that put people at greater risk.

- Get moving. Start slow if you aren't in great shape. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Take a walk daily and gradually increase your pace. Be sure to consult your doctor before starting exercise regimens.

- Limit fats. Fatty foods can be high in cholesterol and trans fats that can clog arteries and lead to heart disease. There are many smart food choices that can help.

Choose lean meats and poultry without skin. Eat less than 300 mg. of cholesterol daily and reduce hydrogenated oils and trans fats. Opting for fruit instead of snack foods or candy is a great way to eat fewer fatty foods.

- Embrace antioxidants. Foods and drinks rich in antioxidants can combat cellular damage that can lead to heart disease. Apples, oranges, grapes and tea are some foods containing these nutrients. Red wine, in particular, has high concentrations of a super antioxidant called resveratrol that's found in the skin of grapes. Resveratrol is a natural substance that has garnered headlines worldwide due to its heart health and life-span enhancing effects.

But due to the intoxication effects and calories, drinking too much red wine can be harmful. That's why many are using supplements or drinks fortified with resveratrol. One beverage garnering attention is Modjo for LIFE, a drink loaded with vitamins, amino acids, antioxidants and five times the amount of resveratrol found in a liter of red wine. It was crafted based on research from Harvard Medical School and the Mayo Clinic, according to the beverage's creator, Victor H. Diaz, who founded Cellutions, an innovator in health supplements.

- More fiber, less salt. Vegetables, fruits and grains are great sources of fiber that may help lower risk of heart disease. Salt can be harmful, so eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium daily. If you have hypertension, are middle-aged or African-American, consume less than 1,500 mg of sodium daily, according to the CDC.

For more tips on heart health, visit the CDC at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). For information about beverages with resveratrol, visit [www.modjolife.com](http://www.modjolife.com). Modjo for Life is available nationwide at 7-Eleven, GNC and other specialty retailers.

"A few smart choices now can make a big difference. With this in mind, eating foods rich in antioxidants and drinking beverages with resveratrol can help trigger your natural defenses," says Diaz. •

## My dearest Valentine

By Laverne P. Larson

God knew I needed someone  
And so He sent me you,  
To love and cherish always  
All my lifetime through.

He wove your wondrous smile  
From a sunbeam in the skies,  
Then picked two bright and shining stars  
And placed them in your eyes.

He made your touch as gentle  
As a breeze in early spring.  
And your soul as light and gay  
As a bird upon the wing.

He gave you understanding  
And laughter like a song  
To cheer and comfort me  
If things go a little wrong.

He filled your heart with love, dear  
And made it kind and true.  
God knew I needed someone  
And so he sent me you.

Our love will last forever  
Till stars have ceased to shine  
And you alone will always be  
My dearest Valentine.

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