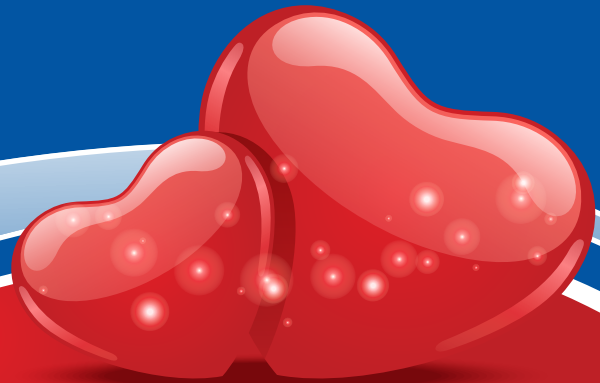


# HEALTHY LIVING

Wellness Newsletter from **AAOA**



*Happy Valentine's Day*

# Chocolate

## Fights Cardiovascular Disease: Myth or Truth



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# Sleepless in America

**According to a National Sleep Foundation poll, nearly two thirds of Americans have trouble sleeping a few nights each week.**

If you're one of those people, here are some tips from sleep experts that may help you get a good night's sleep:

**Avoid late-afternoon or evening naps. They can make it hard for you to fall asleep at night. However, an early afternoon nap of no more than 30 minutes can improve your mood and alertness.**

**Minimize noise, light and room temperature extremes in your bedroom. Don't watch TV, read, eat or work in the bedroom. If you can't fall asleep in 15 or 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing - such as reading - in another room, until you feel sleepy.**

**Go to bed at about the same time each night.**

**Limit caffeine, alcohol and nicotine. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants and can keep you awake. Avoid caffeine after lunch and cut back on how much you have each day. Alcohol may help relax you, but can adversely affect your sleep later in the night.**

**Don't eat a heavy meal right before bedtime. It may make it hard to sleep.**

**Exercising during the day can help deepen sleep at night. But a vigorous workout three or four hours before bed may interfere with sleep.**

**If you're a shift worker, try to have a predictable schedule of night shifts. During your night shift, keep the lights bright to trigger wakefulness. For daytime sleeping, eliminate as much noise and light as possible. Talk to your doctor if you cannot get enough sleep during the day.**

Sleep is one of the most important things you can do for yourself. Without it, it's hard to focus and respond quickly. Lack of sleep can affect your mood and your health. Chronic lack of sleep may also increase your risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

**FEBRUARY  
WELLNESS TIP**



**Sheridah Bennett**  
(AAOA Wellness Champion)

## Wellness Tip

### TALK IT OUT

Some times a long day at the office or a stressful family situation will leave you feeling tired, frustrated and all around emotionally sensitive. When this happens, talk it out with someone that you trust. This will help to reduce the pressure and emotional exhaustion that you feel.

*We want your feed-back about the Wellness Newsletter. Please email us at [wellness@aooamerica.org](mailto:wellness@aooamerica.org) with any wellness tips or healthy recipe ideas.*

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# Chocolate

## Fights Cardiovascular Disease: Myth or Truth

*Is it true, does chocolate have healing powers when it comes to cardiovascular disease?*

In recent years, chocolate has received an increasing amount of attention due to studies that are looking to prove the health benefits of chocolate. The promise of something that tastes so good having a positive impact on our health is sometimes hard to believe. While the results are promising, it is important to know all of the facts before fully acknowledging this theory to be true. Here is what you need to know:

### **Does chocolate help to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease?**

Studies are showing that this may be possible. The key to this possibility is flavinoids, and antioxidants present in chocolate. When researched in plants, flavinoids have been found to protect plants from environmental toxins and help repair damage. Due to this discovery, there has been growing interest in foods that contain flavinoids and how these flavinoids could benefit humans. However, it is important to remember that studies are still being done and more evidence is needed before this theory becomes fact.

### **Does this mean that I can eat any type of candy I want?**

No. While many of our favorite candy bars contain a lot of chocolate, they also contain a large amount of other ingredients and do not always contain chocolate that is high in flavinoids. It has been suggested that the type of chocolate with highest flavinoid content is dark chocolate; this is due to the reduced amount of processing that dark chocolate undergoes compared to milk chocolate.

While the facts surrounding the health benefits of chocolate are not definite, we will most likely be seeing more studies and media attention surrounding this delicacy in the near future. In the meantime, a little indulgence now and then is not a bad thing

# February is The American Heart Month

## Keep Your Heart Healthy Physically and Emotionally

### Did you know?

About 20% of all deaths in the U.S. are directly related to cigarette smoking.

There are a host of factors that could put you at risk for heart disease, but none greater than smoking. Smoking is a “health risk that keeps on giving,” since it also exposes others to the health risks. A heart-healthy lifestyle includes quitting (or not starting) smoking, eating a balanced and sensible diet, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, and managing stress. And don’t forget, visiting the doctor regularly is an essential part of keeping your heart, and your entire body, healthy.

## Communication is Key

### One of the most important ingredients in a relationship is good communication.

That’s true for all work, social and personal relationships. When we disagree, the problem is not usually the disagreement itself, but the feelings that it produces and the way we try to resolve them. Here are some tips on how to better communicate for healthy relationships.

- **Be clear about the issues.**
- **Don’t get personal.** *Avoid insults, sarcasm and personal attacks.*
- **Focus on the issue at hand.**
- **Don’t interrupt.**
- **Don’t exaggerate.** *Avoid statements that begin with “You always” or “You never.”*
- **Stay calm.** *Talk in a relaxed, respectful voice.*
- **Listen.** *Really try to hear the other’s point of view.*
- **Repeat.** *When necessary, repeat back what you have heard, to reinforce that you considered the other person’s viewpoint important.*

## Avocado Beet Salad with Vidalia Onion, Blood Orange & Orange Vinaigrette



### Ingredients:

3 beets, red and/or golden  
2 ripe avocados  
1 large blood orange, peeled, sliced into rounds  
1 small Vidalia onion, thinly sliced  
6 cups mixed baby greens (or any greens)  
1/3 cup chopped walnuts, toasted

### Vinaigrette:

3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
2 Tbsp sherry or white balsamic vinegar  
1/3 cup orange juice  
2 tsp finely grated orange rind, divided  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 tsp fresh ground pepper

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 400° F.  
Remove root, and leave 1-inch stem on beets; scrub; wrap each one in foil. Place beets on baking pan. Roast for 45 minutes to an hour or until tender. When cool enough to handle, rub off skins and slice into wedges.

Prepare vinaigrette by combining olive oil, vinegar, orange juice, 1 teaspoon orange rind, salt and pepper in a small bowl; whisk to combine.

Cut avocado in half, remove pit; scoop avocado from skin with large spoon; slice each half into 6 slices.

Divide salad greens among 6 plates; top each with beets, oranges, onion, and avocado. Drizzle vinaigrette over salad. Garnish with remaining orange zest and toasted walnuts.

## Nutrition Facts

Yield 6 servings

Amount Per Serving

Calories 238	Carbohydrates 19g
Fat 18g	Fiber 6g
Saturated Fat 2g	Protein 4g
Cholesterol 0mg	Sugars 9g
Sodium 252mg	Fiber 6g
Cholesterol: 0mg	



## Nutty Ways to Keep Your Heart Healthy

Research continues to show that eating nuts as part of a healthy diet can be good for you, but they're better for you when not eaten simply as a dessert topper.

### Nuts and your heart:

- Eating nuts as part of a heart-healthy diet lowers LDL (bad cholesterol) levels in your blood.
- Eating nuts reduces your risk for blood clots that can cause a fatal heart attack.
- Nuts are rich in unsaturated fats (including omega-3s), which can help your heart.
- Nuts are high in vitamin E and fiber.
- Nuts are a good vegetarian source of protein.

### How much should you eat?

- All nuts are good, but some are better than others. Walnuts have the highest amount of omega-3 fats.
- Nuts pack a lot of calories for a small amount, so watch your portion size. The recommended amount is 2 ounces of nuts each day. However, as little as 2 ounces per week seem to produce benefits.

### Menu ideas:

- Try crushed walnuts with light cream cheese on an English muffin.
- Enjoy a handful of nuts with a piece of fresh fruit for an afternoon snack.
- Mix nuts with berries and add to cold or hot cereal.
- Munch on a small handful of soy nuts for a quick, savory snack.
- Mix nuts into quick breads or muffin mixes.
- Add cashews to a stir-fry recipe.

The chart below is based on 1 ounce of nuts per variety.

NUTS	C	T	P	F	JUNK FOOD	C	T	P	F
Almonds (24)	160	14	6	3	Potato chips (12)	160	14	6	3
Brazil nuts (6)	190	19	4	2	Doritos (11)	190	19	4	2
Cashews (18)	160	13	4	1	Oreos (3)	160	13	4	1
Chestnuts (20)	65	0.6	1	1	Donut (1)	65	0.6	1	1
Hazelnuts (20)	180	17	4	3	Snickers bar (1)	180	17	4	3
Macadamia (8)	160	17	2	2					
Pecans (10)	200	20	3	3					
Pine Nuts (157)	160	14	7	3					
Pistachios (47)	160	13	6	3					
Walnuts (6)	160	15	4	2					

- C** Calories
- T** Total Fat
- P** Protein
- F** Fiber