FEBRUARY

# American Heart Month
# Heart health made simple

## Monthly well-being tip

This month, embrace heart-healthy nutrition by eating fiber-rich foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains to support heart health and reduce cholesterol. During the winter months, many people experience lower levels of Vitamin D due to reduced sunlight exposure. Talk to your doctor to see if Vitamin D supplements are right for you. It can help boost your mood, strengthen your immune system and even reduce your risk of cardiovascular events during the colder season.

## Well-being fun fact

Did you know laughter can be great for your heart? Not only does it make you feel good, but it also burns calories, reduces stress and increases blood flow, which can lower your risk for a heart attack.




## What should you know

**Taking care of your heart** is essential for a long and active life. While some risk factors for heart disease — such as age and genetics — are beyond our control, there are many lifestyle choices we can make to significantly improve our heart health. Making even small changes can add up over time, leading to a stronger, healthier heart.

- **Eat a balanced diet***: Focus on eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats. Reducing your intake of processed foods, sugar and saturated fats can help lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

*(continued on next page)*

### FEBRUARY WELLNESS OBSERVANCES*

- American Heart Month
- National Cancer Prevention Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
- February 6, 2026 - National Wear Red Day®

### IN-SEASON PRODUCE

- Citrus - Supports immunity*
- Pomegranates - Support antioxidant intake*
- Sweet potatoes - Support heart health*
- Root vegetables - Support steady energy*
- Leafy greens - Support nutrient diversity*

*FOR HEALTH OBSERVANCES SOURCE: Society for Health Care Marketing and Development. 2025 Calendar of Health Observances and Recognition Days. Available at: SHSMD.org/2025-health-observances-calendar. Accessed December 2, 2025.
*FOR BALANCED DIET SOURCE: American Heart Association. Life's Essential 8: Your checklist for lifelong good health. Available at: Heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8. Accessed November 24, 2025.
*FOR CITRUS SOURCE: Center for the Science in the Public Interest. What's in Season: February produce guide. January 28, 2025. Available at: CSPI.org/cspi-news/whats-season-february-produce-guide. Accessed November 24, 2025.
*FOR POMERGRANATE SOURCE: Eating Well. 5 Foods to stock up on in February, according to a dietitian. Available at: EatingWell.com/foods-to-stock-up-on-in-february-8558934. Accessed: November 24, 2025.
* FOR OTHER PRODUCE SOURCE. AZ Dietitians. February Produce Guide - What's in season? February 5, 2024. Available at: AZdietitians.com/blog/february-produce-guide-whats-in-season/. Accessed: November 24, 2025.

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## What should you know (continued)

- **Stay active***: Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking, each week. Regular physical activity strengthens your heart, helps control weight and reduces stress.
- **Manage stress***: Chronic stress may contribute to heart disease. Practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, mindfulness meditation or yoga, to help keep stress in check.
- **Get enough quality sleep***: Aim for 7-9 hours of restful sleep per night. Poor sleep raises your risk of heart disease. Try keeping your room cool and dark, and avoid screens an hour before bed, or use a blue light filter to support better sleep and sleep habits.
- **Quit tobacco***: Smoking and vaping increase your risk of heart attack and stroke. Quitting is one of the best things you can do for your heart.





- **Limit alcohol***: Drinking too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure and contribute to heart disease. If you choose to drink, do so in moderation — up to one drink per day for women and two for men.
- **Keep track of your numbers***: Regularly check your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Working with your health care provider to keep these in a healthy range can reduce your risk of heart disease.

Remember, you don't have to change everything overnight. Start with one small step and build from there. Small, consistent actions lead to lasting habits. Love your heart by making one healthy choice today, and let that be the first step towards a more heart-healthy lifestyle.

*FOR LIFESTYLE TIPS SOURCE: AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION. American Heart Association. Life's Essential 8: Your checklist for lifelong good health. Available at: Heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8. Accessed November 24, 2025.

*FOR MANAGING STRESS SOURCE: American Heart Association. Stress and Heart. February 8, 2024. Available at: Heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/stress-and-heart-health. Accessed November 24, 2025.

*FOR LIMITING ALCOHOL SOURCE: American Heart Association. Alcohol Use and Cardiovascular Disease: A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. June 9, 2025. Available at: AHAJournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001341. Accessed 24, 2025.

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# Lemon chicken & cinnamon glazed root vegetables*

## Ingredients (4 servings)

For the Cinnamon Glazed Root Vegetables:

- 1 cup small raw sweet potato (cut into 1-inch cubes, peeled if desired)
- 1/2 cup baby carrots (cut into 1-inch pieces)
- 1 small turnip (cut into 1-inch cubes)
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. light tub margarine
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. brown sugar

For the lemon chicken:

- Non-stick cooking spray
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (all visible fat discarded)
- 1 lemon
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. dried parsley
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano



## Instructions

For the Cinnamon Glazed Root Vegetables:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Combine vegetables in a medium mixing bowl and toss with olive oil to coat.
3. Spread vegetables on a baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes.
4. Stir vegetables and bake an additional 20 minutes until vegetables are tender (pierce easily with a fork) and are lightly browned.
5. Return vegetables to mixing bowl and add margarine, cinnamon and brown sugar.
6. Toss until margarine is melted and vegetables are coated with cinnamon and sugar.

For the lemon chicken:

1. Pound chicken to even thinness (about 1 inch).
2. Spray a large skillet with non-stick cooking spray, place over medium heat.
3. Add chicken to skillet and squeeze juice of 1/2 lemon over the chicken.
4. Sprinkle pepper, parsley, and oregano over the chicken..
5. Cook for 5-10 minutes on each side.

Nutriton:

Calories: 237 | Total Fat: 7.5g | Carbohydrate: 16g
Protein: 25g | Sodium: 202mg

## Need a little snack?

What are some healthy options when you need a little something between meals? For starters, steer away from processed foods and choose whole foods like fruits,vegetables, nuts and whole grains. Focus on nutrient-dense options that combine protein, fiber and healthy fats for satiety. Portion control is key, so be mindful of serving sizes and avoid packaged snacks high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats. Purchase single-serve containers, or if you want to save a little money, buy these foods in bulk and separate them into portion sizes for easy grab and go options. To keep it light, aim for snacks that have less than 200 calories.*

*FOR LEMON CHICKEN RECIPE: American Heart Association. Lemon Chicken and Cinnamon glazed root vegetables. Available at: Recipes.heart.org/en/recipes/lemon-chicken-and-cinnamon. Accessed November 24, 2025.
*FOR SNACK CALORIE COUNT SOURCE: Mayo Clinic Health System. Are you mindlessly munching or sensibly snacking? January 17, 2024. Available at: Mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/sensible-snacking. Accessed November 24, 2025.

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