Happy Heart Month!

Greetings! Happy Valentine’s Day and Heart Month! American Heart Month is celebrated in February of every year. Heart disease is often thought of as a man’s disease. However, it is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. More than half of the total heart disease deaths are women.

A healthy diet and lifestyle can help prevent heart disease. For a healthy heart, make the following smart daily food choices as recommended by the American Heart Association:

• Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to help control your weight and your blood pressure.
• Select fat-free and low fat dairy products.
• Make half of your grains whole. Whole-grain foods contain fiber that can help lower your blood cholesterol and help you feel full, which may help you to manage your weight.
• Read food labels to select foods that are low in trans fat and cholesterol, both of which are linked to heart disease.
• Drink fewer beverages and foods with added sugars.
• Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt to reduce the risk of high blood pressure.
• Choose lean meats and poultry without skin.

Many cases of heart disease can be prevented, so take steps to be healthier today. What better time to start improving your heart health than now—the month of February—the Heart Month!

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Dietary Guidelines and Recommendations for Cancer Prevention

The new Dietary Guidelines for Americans offer several key recommendations that can help people eat to lower cancer risk, yet AICR experts expressed dissatisfaction with their advice on red meat. Click Here to Read More

The Sugar-Cancer Connection

Does sugar feed cancer? It’s one of the questions we get asked the most and now sugar’s role in our health is back in the spotlight. Watch our one-minute video for our evidence-based answer. Click Here to Watch Video

Sugar and Breast Cancer, An Intriguing But Early Animal Study

The overall body of evidence suggests that sugar’s link to cancer risk is an indirect one: diets high in sugar can lead to excess body fat, a cause of ten cancers. Now a study performed in mice suggests a direct link between sugar consumption and breast cancer. Click Here to Read More

From Clutter to Chaos ... to Calm

Mary Hunt | January 4, 2016

Recently I read about a couple who live in Oklahoma City. They don’t have a lot of clutter in their house but they do find it impossible to part with their children’s things. The guest cottage behind their house is nearly filled with old toys, outgrown clothes, years of kids’ artwork, school papers, trophies, sports paraphernalia, baby beds, bassinets and a rocking horse. Seems they can’t bring themselves to clean it out or part with all of these things for fear their now-grown children will think they don’t love them.

I know the feeling, and honestly I don’t think it’s that unusual. It’s just that most of us don’t have a guest house where we can stash and hide all the clutter. Thankfully, it is possible to deal with clutter in realistic and reasoned ways so that it doesn’t turn into chaos.

Marla Cilley, known to many as the Fly Lady and author of the fabulous book, Sink Reflections, says CHAOS is an acronym for “Can’t Have Anyone Over Syndrome.”

The good news is that clutter does not have to control our homes and our lives. It requires only a modicum of determination to take that very first baby step toward conquering stuff. Then another and another all the way to peace and serenity.

READ THIS BOOK. Honestly, I cannot give you a better piece of advice than to read Fly Lady’s book, Sink Reflections. You’ll laugh, you might cry—but for sure you will know what to do. Right now. Marla is a reformed clutter bug and knows what she’s talking about. She could motivate our friends in Oklahoma City to not only get that guest cottage cleaned out—she’d do that in a loving, compelling way that would allow them to retain all of the memories, assure their children of
their love and end up with a place for guests to rest, relax and enjoy themselves.

**THE GIFT OF PHOTOGRAPHY.** All of those things that you can’t part with because they hold such meaning and memory? Take a picture of each one. Take several. Zoom in, pan out. Do a panorama view if you want. Now the memories are preserved in a way you can really enjoy them. And you can part with the actual items, guilt-free.

**STASH THE CASH.** I have a feeling our Oklahoma friends are sitting on a pile of money. That rocking horse alone could bring a few bucks at a garage sale or advertised on Craigslist.org. Who knows what other treasures are rotting away out there—things that could be turned into money that would fit nicely in a savings account.

**TAKE THE DEDUCTIONS.** I’m thinking about clothing and household items. And I’m also thinking about all of the new stuff you, your family, your kids got for Christmas. Wow. Where did you put all of it? Now would be an awesome time to go through closets, drawers and cupboards to identify old and unused so you can make room. For each new thing that came to live in your house, remove one or more items you don’t really use or enjoy anymore. But don’t throw these things away! If they are in good condition, [donate them to a charity](#) like the Salvation Army or other similar organizations in your community. The highly useful workbook, “Money For Your Used Clothing”, is the only resource I recommend to help you identify the true market value that you can deduct (when you itemize your federal tax return) for each of your items. Make sure you are using the correct edition of that valuation workbook which should match the tax year for which you are filing. “Money For Your Used Clothing Tax Year 2015” (for taxes you will file on or before April 18, 2016) is still available at the discounted price of $20 by clicking HERE or by calling 800-550-3502 during business hours MT. We have a limited supply and it’s going fast.

Just because you can’t imagine changing your life from chaos to calm in a single day doesn’t mean you shouldn’t get started. According to Marla Cilley, “Things done imperfectly still bless our lives.” And isn’t that great news. [Click Here to Read More.](#)
Are you eating right for a good life?

The nutrients below are often lacking in the American diet. Deficiencies can lead to health symptoms that greatly impact quality of life:

- **Calcium** – back pain, poor sleep, depression, high blood pressure
- **Choline** – feeling anxious or restless, muscle damage, fatty liver
- **Folate** – gray hair, fatigue, canker sores, poor growth, heart disease
- **Iron** – lack of energy, feeling grumpy, headaches, difficulty concentrating, anemia
- **Vitamin D** – depression, tingling in the hands, feet or toes, osteoporosis

Quick test: Are you eating right for a good life?

The HealthWatch 360 online tool and mobile app is scientifically designed to analyze nutrition in your diet. Take five minutes and log everything you ate yesterday. Find out now if you are getting the nutrients you need to stay energized and healthy. It is very simple, and free!

What can HealthWatch 360 do?

- Track foods and fitness, count calories and summarize nutrient intake.
- Track 500 symptoms and health conditions, such as energy level, headaches and acne.
- Personalized nutrition plans based on your HealthWatch Goal or doctor’s recommendations.
- Provide daily reports about your nutritional status and diet quality with tips to help you improve.
- Strong analytic functions with beautiful charts and trends to illustrate which nutrients come from which foods and what symptoms are connected to what you eat.

Why is HealthWatch 360 better?

- Choose your own HealthWatch Goal, like heart health, weight control and energy level, and get a personalized nutrition plan.
- Accurate and comprehensive. Data analysis for 30+ nutrients in your diet, like omega-3, potassium and zinc.
- Fun and encouraging. Your Nutrition Score and colorful smiley faces in your Daily Report help you easily understand your diet and nutrition quality while motivating you to be your best.
- It’s free.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020

Today the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture released the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Now in its eighth edition, the Dietary Guidelines continues to be an important resource to help our Nation reach its highest standard of health.

Making small changes in food choices can add up to big health benefits and help prevent diet-related chronic diseases. So the updated Dietary Guidelines describes how Americans can establish long-term healthy eating patterns by emphasizing small, doable shifts in their daily eating habits.

For more information on the new guidance, check out the Dietary Guidelines digital press kit. The press kit includes answers to frequently asked questions, B-roll footage for members of the media, and more.

Tweet about it. The 2015–2020 #DietaryGuidelines for Americans is now available! Learn about the new Guidelines & recommendations: http://1.usa.gov/21N65zL

Almonds may help augment nutrients in diet, UF/IFAS study shows

Eating a moderate amount of almonds each day may enrich the diets of adults and their young children, according to a new study by UF/IFAS nutrition scientists.

Cutline: UF/IFAS file.) Click Here to Read More
Key “Soft Skills” that Foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus across Fields

Soft skills are skills, competencies, behaviors, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable people to navigate their environment, work with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. We identified the five soft skills that most enable youth (15-29) worldwide to be successful in the workplace. Click Here to Read More

Bullies in the Block Area: The Early Childhood Origins of “Mean” Behavior

This report examines what we know about behaviors in young children that appear related to later bullying, and what can buffer factors that may link to bullying. Even watching non-violent TV, for example, may be connected. The report is accompanied by a short practitioners’ guide highlighting promising strategies and evidence-based interventions. Click Here to Read More

Five Myths about Child Maltreatment

This issue of the monthly Child Trends 5 debunks common myths about child maltreatment. One myth: In families with abusive parents, parents and children don’t love each other. Click Here to Read More

Green vegetables: does your MTHFR gene require that you eat more?

Your mom always told you to “eat your vegetables!” Did you know this simple advice stems from important molecular mechanisms that link your genes, nutrition and health? Green leafy vegetables are one of the richest sources of folate, an essential vitamin that you must get from your diet to stay healthy.

20% of people have a mutation in their MTHFR gene that can cause grey hair and increase risk of heart disease... Eating your vegetables can help!

Common symptoms of folate deficiency include:

- Fatigue
- Grey hair
- Canker sores
- Red, swollen tongue
- Anemia

Folate deficiency is a bigger deal than you might think. Folate helps your body convert harmful homocysteine, an inflammatory amino acid, to an essential amino acid, methionine. If you don’t get enough folate, homocysteine levels can build up, damaging your blood vessels and increasing risk of heart disease. Folate is also critical for DNA and RNA synthesis, neural development and cell differentiation. If a woman does not get enough folate while pregnant, her baby has a higher risk of being born with neural tube defects, cleft lip or cleft palate.

MTHFR and Folate Deficiency

MTHFR is a key enzyme for folate metabolism. About 20% of people have MTHFR risk variants that reduce the activity of the enzyme and compromise their body’s ability to metabolize folate. 14-23% of people carry one copy of two different risk variants, which is known as a compound heterozygote genotype. This
combination results in a 48% reduction in MTHFR activity and puts carriers at even greater risk for deficiency compared to those with two copies of the same risk variant. Fortunately, this reduced activity can be compensated for by eating more green vegetables!

Do you have MTHFR risk variants? Check your genes. The recommended daily allowance (RDA) of folate for the general population is 400 DFE per day. Needs can be met with natural sources of folate, or fortified foods, which provide folic acid. Some of the best sources are:

- Fortified cereals (600-800 DFE per cup)
- Liver (turkey – 587 DFE per 3 oz)
- Lentils (179 DFE per ½ cup)
- Turnip greens (107 DFE per cup)
- Brussels sprouts (94 DFE per cup)
- Broccoli (57 DFE per cup)
- Avocado (53 DFE per ½ fruit)
- Blackberries (36 DFE per ½ cup)

Keep in mind that, as with most water-soluble vitamins, 15-40% of folate can be lost through cooking. You must account for these losses when tracking your dietary intake. You can use HealthWatch 360 to analyze the nutrition in your recipes. The recipe maker includes cooking methods so you can get a more accurate measurement of the true nutrition your recipes provide.

It is also important to note that, if you have MTHFR risk variants, you must get enough riboflavin, vitamin B6 and vitamin B12, which are all important for folate metabolism. Log in to the HealthWatch 360 online tool or mobile app to analyze how much folate and other B vitamins are in your diet and find out what food choices can help you improve.

Handwashing

RAISE YOUR [CLEAN] HAND TO FIGHT FLU! CDC has confirmed that a key strategy for flu prevention is frequent and thorough handwashing for at least 20 seconds with clean, running water and soap. Scrub all areas (including backs of hands and under fingernails), then rinse and dry. And, be hands-on with ACI’s flu update, which includes a handy new infographic that you can print it out and post by handwashing sinks at home, school, and work!

The Developing Brain: Implications for Youth Programs

This brief highlights the presentation of a leading neuroscientist about the impact of early experiences on the brain, and opportunities to mitigate damage throughout the lifespan. Respondents discussed the implications of this research for programs and policies for at-risk youth. Click Here to Read More

Parents Behind Bars: What Happens to Their Children?

An estimated five million U.S. children have or have had at least one parent imprisoned—that’s 1 in every 14 children under 18. This report outlines who these children are, the school and behavioral problems they are more likely to face, and ways to better support these children. This report attracted more than 600 media stories and has helped to raise visibility about the plight of children of incarcerated parents. Click Here to Read More

Surfaces

FIGHT FLU GERMS ON SURFACES, TOO. Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces is another key strategy for keeping your family healthy during the season of “indoor together time.” This includes common germy spots like doorknobs, faucet handles, and TV remotes. Flu germs can live on surfaces longer than other germs can—so check out ACI’s important notes for cleaning these common items!
Wendy’s Wanderings

This is the month that we resolve to make changes in our lives for the better. For a happier and healthier 2016, why not make some landscaping and gardening resolutions? I always look for some easy things to quickly mark off my list, so for my first “Wanderings” column of 2016, I thought I might share a few simple landscaping resolutions. Click Here to Read More

Suet is for the Birds

Suet cakes are a great source of high-energy animal fat and protein for the birds in your landscape. While they’re widely available for purchase and not that expensive, making your own allows you to customize the flavors and have some fun in the process. Click Here to Read More

Crazy For Cabbage

Get your new year gardening off to a healthy and productive start by planting a little cabbage this January. These winter veggies thrive in the cold; in fact, they require cool temperatures in order to grow. Cabbage can be eaten raw in cole slaw, pickled in sauerkraut, or cooked into a variety of dishes. Plus it’s high in vitamins, particularly vitamin C. Click Here to Read More

Winter Interest: Bark Appeal

It can be a challenge to add interest to your landscape for winter. Choosing trees that have unusual or interesting bark can bring dashes of texture and even color to your landscape during the less spectacular gardening months. Click Here to Read More

Five Highly Useful FREE Websites

Mary Hunt | January 7, 2016

The Internet is a wonderful thing. In what seems like a few short years, this phenomenon has changed the world—our lives! Somedays, I wonder how we lived without it. But with all of its wonderfulness, it can also be very intimidating. Sometimes you just need a friend (like me) to slog through all of the nonsense to point you to websites that are highly useful and—the best part—free!

A BOWL FULL OF LEMONS. Just in case one of your resolutions this year is to get more organized, check out A Bowl Full of Lemons, an online community for those striving to get their lives in order. The website is loaded with ideas and weekly challenges to get you into organization mode. You’ll also find tips on budgeting and the best way to clean your house.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS. Watching the news these days can make us want to run for cover. But, instead of hiding, make your own corner of the world a better place to be. For ways to do just that, go to Random Acts of Kindness. You’ll find lots of free and low-cost ideas, such as letting someone go ahead of you in the shopping line or giving someone you meet a sincere compliment. Personally, I am drawn to the idea, “Sew for Free.” I love all kinds of needle and fiber crafts, so the idea of offering to mend, hem or sew someone’s clothes for free, as a simple act of kindness, appeals to me.

This year, Random Acts of Kindness Week is February 14th to the 20th. Valentine’s Day happens to fall during that week, which I’m sure is by design.

NEIGHBORHOOD SCOUT. If you’re planning to move to a new area or you’re simply curious about how your current town fares overall, check out Neighborhood Scout.

SENIOR DISCOUNTS. If you’re over 50, there are some great discounts you can take advantage of. It’s just a matter of knowing where to find them. Look no further than Senior Discounts.
BUY NOTHING PROJECT. If you’re familiar with Freecycle, the online network that lets you find or give away almost anything for free, there’s a new option in town: The Buy Nothing Project. It works on the same premise as Freecycle only you make your connections through Facebook. Click Here to Read More

Fast and Easy Kale

Ken McCarthy | The Real Food Channel

Kale is growing in popularity because it is packed with nutrients and has cancer fighting properties.

Kale can be used in soups, salads, and even be dried to make kale “chips.”

Here’s a quick and easy recipe to help you get this wonder vegetable into your diet. Click Here to Watch Video (5:55)

Top stories from 2015

In case you missed them, check out some of our most popular content from last year. Read and share these practical tips to help older adults stay safe and healthy.

- Top 10 senior scams
- 6 steps to prevent a fall
- Vermont named healthiest state for seniors

America’s Health Rankings has released its 2015 Senior Report. In its third year, the report uses 35 measures to track the state-by-state health of the senior population and gives each state a ranking. Click Here to See where your state ranks

Calendar of Events

Wellness Wednesdays

Join us the first Wednesday of each month for a wellness presentation.

Attend in person or stream live from your computer. Can’t make it? All Wellness Wednesday presentations are recorded and posted to the Media Library at GatorCare.org/wellness/library.

To receive updates about upcoming presentations, join the Wellness Email List.

To sign up, email listserv@lists.ufl.edu with the following message: “subscribe WELLNESS-L yourfirstname yourlastname” example: subscribe WELLNESS-L john smith

BUY NOTHING PROJECT. If you’re familiar with Freecycle, the online network that lets you find or give away almost anything for free, there’s a new option in town: The Buy Nothing Project. It works on the same premise as Freecycle only you make your connections through Facebook. Click Here to Read More

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