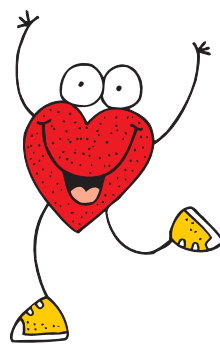


## Take Care of Your Heart

Have you thought about your hard-working heart lately? February, American Heart Month, is a good time to think about keeping your heart healthy and strong.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is one of the risk factors for heart disease and stroke. Do you know your numbers? High blood pressure often is called the silent killer because we may not have symptoms.



### Are You At Risk?

Which of these increase your risk for having high blood pressure? The answer is at the end.

- a. Being overweight
- b. Having relatives with high blood pressure
- c. Getting too little physical activity (less than 30 minutes/day)
- d. Smoking
- e. All of these

Answer: e

### More Isn't Better

Salt also is known as "sodium chloride." High-sodium diets are linked to high blood pressure.

Much of the sodium in our diets comes from processed foods (such as canned soup and dinner mixes). The salt we add at the table is only one-twentieth of the sodium in our diets.

The latest nutrition advice says we should get 2,300 milligrams of sodium (or less) daily. Some people on special diets need even less. Most people consume too much: about 1½ teaspoons of salt every day from all sources. That's 3,400 milligrams!

### Shake the Salt Habit

Mark (X) the ideas you plan to try.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Read Nutrition Facts labels to learn about sodium content. A "low-sodium" food has 140 milligrams or less per serving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use spices and herbs or low-sodium seasonings, such as garlic powder instead of garlic salt.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Choose uncured meat more often than cured (such as pork roast instead of ham).
- \_\_\_\_\_ In recipes, substitute low-sodium products for regular products.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sprinkle lemon juice over vegetables instead of salt.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rinse canned vegetables with water before cooking to remove some sodium.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Taste food before adding salt. If you add salt, add one shake instead of two or three.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Put the pepper shaker on the table. Leave the salt shaker in the cupboard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make plain potatoes, rice or vegetables instead of packaged side dishes (such as seasoned potatoes or rice).

Visit [www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise) for more information.

This material was funded in part by USDA's Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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I froze some fresh ground beef. When I took it out to use it, it was grayish brown. What happened? Is it safe?

Your meat most likely was freezer burned. Freezer burn is caused by air reaching the surface of the food. Freezer burn does not make food unsafe, just dry in spots. Cut freezer-burned portions away either before or after cooking the food.

You may need to throw away heavily freezer-burned foods for quality reasons. They may have an unpleasant flavor. Properly package meats and other foods to maintain quality and prevent freezer burn. Use airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, freezer plastic bags or freezer paper.

For more information, visit this Web site: [www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/food.htm](http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/food.htm) (click on "Food Preservation and Storage" then "Freezing")



## Did You Know?

Cooked dry edible beans (such as navy and pinto beans) are good for your heart.

They contain fiber, especially "soluble fiber," which can lower blood cholesterol levels.

They're naturally low in fat and a good source of protein in your diet.

## Quick Minestrone Soup

- 16-ounce package frozen mixed vegetables
- 2 14-ounce cans Italian-style stewed or crushed tomatoes\*
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken or beef broth\*
- 15-ounce can garbanzo beans or kidney beans (or bean of choice)
- 1 c. uncooked pasta (such as elbow macaroni or bow tie pasta)



Combine frozen vegetables, tomatoes, broth and beans. Bring to a boil, then add the pasta. Reduce to low heat. Simmer for six to eight minutes until pasta and vegetables are tender.

\* To reduce sodium content, choose low-sodium canned tomatoes and broth.

Menu Idea:  
Quick Minestrone Soup,  
whole-wheat rolls,  
canned peaches  
and low-fat milk.

Makes six 1-cup servings.

*Per serving, using "regular" sodium products: 210 calories, 41 grams (g) carbohydrate, 1.5 g fat, 10 g fiber and 560 milligrams (mg) sodium. Using low-sodium products cuts the sodium to 125 mg sodium per serving.*

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Contact the local office of the  
NDSU Extension Service  
for more information  
on food and nutrition or  
managing your food dollar.

