

A message from NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

2/2/2022

**Greetings from NDS! Today's Wellness Wednesday email focuses on the important topic of **heart health**.**

## **Celebrate American Heart Month in Schools**

February is National Heart Health Month. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Additionally, people with poor heart health are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Heart healthy living involves understanding your personal risk and taking steps to reduce your chances of developing heart disease (such as getting your blood pressure and cholesterol checked, choosing heart healthy foods, quitting smoking, aiming for a healthy body weight, managing stress, getting regular physical activity, and getting an adequate amount of quality sleep). It is important to teach children from a young age how they can keep their heart healthy, which will also improve their general health and wellbeing.

Ways for schools, teachers, caregivers, and students to take action to live a heart healthy life:

- Daily [classroom physical activity](#) breaks
- National Wear Red Day is the first Friday in February (coordinate for the whole school or just your class to all wear red that Friday to promote heart health awareness).
- When it is safe to gather at school, [Family Fitness Night\(s\)](#) are a great way to teach the entire family about the importance of physical activity for promoting a healthy heart. Make plans this spring for an event next year!
- Learning and cooking [heart-healthy recipes](#)
  - Examples of heart healthy foods: vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, and leafy greens (like spinach, kale, and cabbage); fruits, such as apples, bananas, oranges, and grapes; whole grains, like oatmeal, brown rice, and whole-grain bread; fat-free or low-fat dairy products; protein-rich foods, such as fish, lean meats, eggs, legumes (kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas), nuts, seeds, and soy products (tofu); oils and foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, such as canola, corn, olive, safflower, sesame, sunflower, and soybean oils (not coconut or palm oil), nuts (walnuts, almonds, pine nuts), nut and seed butters, salmon and trout, seeds (sesame, sunflower, pumpkin, flax), tofu, avocados.
- Teach students, teachers, and caregivers how to manage stress
- Meditation or yoga classes
- Teach a lesson about heart health, or incorporate information into other core subjects

Click [here](#) for more information about American Heart Month and steps for living a heart-healthy lifestyle. The Action for Healthy Kids [website](#) also has more tips and resources, including sample [lesson plans](#), for incorporating heart health education and activities at school.

A message from NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

2/9/2022

## Today's Wellness Wednesday topic focuses on the February Harvest of the Month Produce:

### Mushrooms

PA Harvest of the Month highlights mushrooms during the month of February. Did you know that the state of Pennsylvania leads the U.S. in mushroom production with more than 50 farms growing nearly 557 million pounds of mushrooms annually?

There are three parts of a mushroom: a cap, gills, and a stem. While they are commonly placed in the vegetable category, mushrooms are actually considered a fungus, and, unlike plants, they do not need light to grow; mushrooms are grown in sterile environments in "growing houses." Mushrooms can also grow in the wild, though some wild mushrooms are toxic, so it's best to purchase them at the store or market rather than pick your own.

Mushrooms come in many different varieties, some of the most common being button, cremini, shiitake, oyster, and portabella. Mushrooms are 90% water, low in sodium, fat, and calories, and high in B vitamins, particularly riboflavin and niacin. Riboflavin plays a role in making energy from foods we eat, and niacin is involved with the body's digestive system, skin, and nerves.

For more information on mushrooms including selection, handling, storage, preparation, and recipes, click [here](#).



A message from NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

2/16/2022

## Greetings from NDS!

Today's Wellness Wednesday topic again focuses on **Heart Health:**

### **Be The Beat**

Did you know that CPR can double, or even triple a heart attack victim's chance of survival? Each year over 350,000 people suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, and only 10% of those people survive.

The American Heart Association (AHA) created their "Be the Beat" and CPR in Schools programs to teach younger generations how to save a life through CPR. Be the Beat is a website for both teachers and school administrators that provides free tools to help start and sustain hands-only CPR and AED training programs in schools.

Hands-only CPR involves two simple steps:

1. calling 911 and
2. pushing hard and fast on a person's chest at a rate of 100-120 beats per minute. Chest compressions are an essential part of CPR because they push oxygenated blood through the body to keep a person's vital organs alive.

The AHA teamed up with the Anthem Foundation to create a "[Don't Drop the Beat](#)" playlist on Spotify to aid in teaching people the correct rate to perform chest compressions when giving CPR; all songs on the playlist are between 100-120 beats per minute. Through the Be the Beat [website](#), teachers are able to access and download materials to teach students the two simple steps to hands-only CPR, heart health lesson plans, and classroom aids like stickers and posters.

A message from NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

2/23/2022

**Greetings from NDS! Today's Wellness Wednesday topic focuses on another awareness campaign that occurs each February.**

## **National Children's Dental Health Month**

Did you know that a child's oral health can impact their overall nutrition, growth, and development? The health of a person's mouth affects the consumption of nutrients, and diet and nutrition also affect the tissues in the mouth. Early childhood tooth decay has become the most common chronic childhood disease, impacting even more children than asthma.

According to the American Dental Association (ADA), more than 40% of children have tooth decay by the time they reach Kindergarten. Further, kids who suffer from poor oral health are 3x more likely to miss school due to dental pain. This dental pain can also impact a child's ability to eat. Missing school and not being able to eat a diverse and balanced diet can negatively impact a child's physical and mental development, especially in early years.

Throughout the month of February, the ADA celebrates National Children's Dental Health Month and promotes the benefits of good oral health to children, caregivers, and teachers. [The theme for February 2022 is "Sealants Make Sense."](#) Sealants are thin, protective coatings (made from plastic or other dental materials) that adhere to the chewing surface of back teeth to keep cavities from forming and potentially even stop early stages of decay from becoming full-blown cavities. To get the most benefit from sealants, they should be placed as soon as molars come through. First molars appear around age 6, and second molars break through around age 12. Caregivers can discuss with their child's dentist if sealants are a good option for the child. Sealants are an equitable and long-term approach to prevent cavities. Sealants on molars have been shown to reduce the risk of cavities by 80%. School-age children without sealants have almost 3x more cavities than those with sealants. However, sealants are not a replacement for daily brushing, flossing, and regular six-month dental appointments.

The ADA website is an excellent resource for more information on the [relationship between nutrition and oral health](#) and [sealants](#). This [website](#) has important tips and guidelines for maintaining your child's oral health and protecting baby teeth.