

February 2024

Helping caregivers through their journey one step at a time.

Ideas for Self-Care on Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is a day of love and celebration, but if you are an elder caregiver this may be the last thing on your mind. Caring for elderly family members can bring great joy and satisfaction, but without proper self-care, caregiving can take its toll on the physical and emotional well-being of the caregiver.

Valentine's Day is a great excuse to treat yourself to something special, so why not go all out and pamper yourself? Eat your favorite food, take a hot bath or shower, or read a book that you've been meaning to get through. If you are someone who loves retail therapy, schedule some time to indulge in some shopping. Scheduling a massage is also a great way to relax and enjoy some TLC. Don't forget that while caregiving activities are important, taking some time for self-care will benefit both you and your senior loved one in the long run.

<https://www.seniorhelpers.com/co/greeley/resources/blogs/why-elder-caregivers-should-take-time-out-for-self-care-on-valentines-day/>

**Caregivers take care of your
heart! You are so important!!!**

February is Heart Month

Heart Month 2024 is an annual observance dedicated to raising awareness about heart health and cardiovascular diseases. It serves as a reminder to prioritize heart-healthy lifestyles, learn about heart disease prevention, and support those affected by cardiovascular conditions.





February 2024

Valentine's Day

Find the words on the list in the word search below!

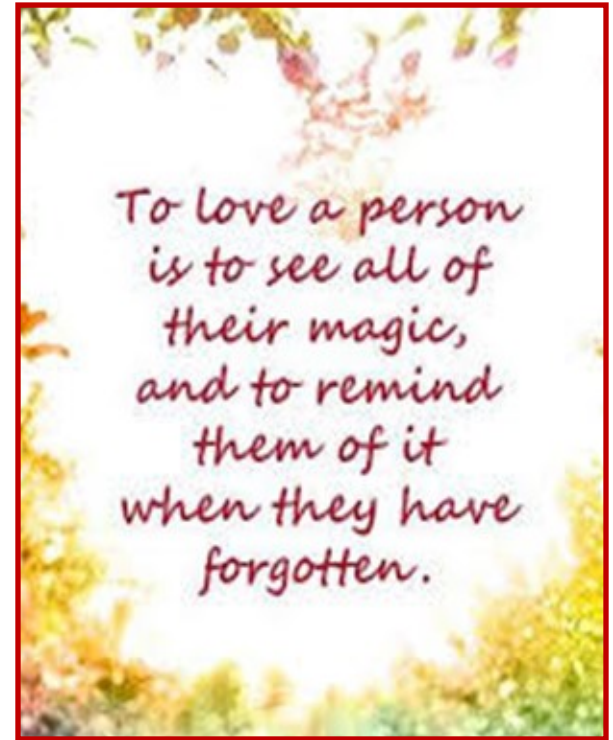
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ARROWS
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NICE
ROSE
SWEET

CHOCOLATE
FRIENDSHIP
HAPPINESS
LETTERS
PINK
SERVICE
THOUGHTFUL



Hello! My name is **Alison Simo**, MSN, RN, CDCES and I am the Wellness Education Coordinator and Dementia Health Coach at Thrive Alliance. Please reach out to me for suggestions at any time at 812-418-6690 or asimo@thrive-alliance.org.

This newsletter is for YOU!!!

WELLNESS CORNER for Caregivers (and those in their care)

Heart Healthy Foods

When it comes to your heart, what you eat matters. Follow these tips for heart-healthy eating:

- **Eat less saturated fat.** Cut back on fatty meats and high-fat dairy products. Limit foods like pizza, burgers, and creamy sauces or gravy.
- **Cut down on sodium (salt).** Read the Nutrition Facts label and choose foods that are lower in sodium. Look for foods labeled “low sodium” or “no salt added” — like some canned soups, canned vegetables, packaged meals, and snack foods.
- **Get more fiber.** Eat vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains to add fiber to your diet.

<https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/health-conditions/heart-health/heart-healthy-foods-shopping-list>



American Heart Association.

ANSWERS
by heart



Lifestyle + Risk Reduction
High Blood Pressure

What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls. It's measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

High blood pressure (HBP) means the pressure in your arteries is higher than it should be. Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension.

Blood pressure is written as two numbers, such as 112/78 mm Hg. The top, or larger, number (called systolic pressure) is the pressure when the heart beats. The bottom, or smaller, number (called diastolic pressure) is the pressure when the heart rests between beats.

Normal blood pressure is below 120/80 mm Hg. If you're an adult and your systolic pressure is 120 to 129, and your diastolic pressure is less than 80, you have **elevated blood pressure**. **High blood pressure** is a systolic pressure of 130 or higher, or a diastolic pressure of 80 or higher, that stays high over time.

High blood pressure usually has no signs or symptoms. That's why it is so dangerous. But it can be managed.

Nearly half of the American population over age 20, has HBP, and many don't even know it. Not treating high blood pressure is dangerous. High blood pressure increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Make sure you get your blood pressure checked regularly and treat it the way your health care professional advises.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130-139	or	80-89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

Am I at higher risk of developing HBP?

There are risk factors that increase your chances of developing HBP. Some you can control, and some you can't.

Those that can be controlled are:

- Cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke
- Diabetes
- Being obese or overweight
- High cholesterol
- Unhealthy diet (high in sodium, low in potassium, and drinking too much alcohol)
- Physical inactivity

Factors that can't be modified or are difficult to control are:

- Family history of high blood pressure
- Race/ethnicity
- Increasing age
- Gender (males)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Obstructive sleep apnea

Socioeconomic status and psychosocial stress are also risk factors for HBP. These can affect access to basic living needs, medication, health care professionals, and the ability to adopt lifestyle changes.

(continued)



American Heart Association.

What is High Blood Pressure?

How can I tell I have it?

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to get it checked regularly.

For proper diagnosis of HBP, your health care professional will use an average based on two or more readings obtained on two or more visits.



What can I do about HBP?

- Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a healthy diet that is low in saturated and trans fats and rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Aim to consume less than 1,500 mg/day of sodium (salt). Even reducing your daily intake by 1,000 mg can help.
- Eat foods rich in potassium. Aim for 3,500 – 5,000 mg of dietary potassium per day.
- Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day if you're a woman or two drinks a day if you're a man.
- Be more physically active. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity or at least 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week, or a combination of both, spread throughout the week. Add muscle-strengthening activity at least two days per week for more health benefits.
- Take medicine the way your health care professional tells you.
- Know what your blood pressure should be and work to keep it at that level.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit heart.org to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up for our monthly *Heart Insight* e-news for heart patients and their families at HeartInsight.org.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at heart.org/SupportNetwork.

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write down your questions for the next time you see your health care professional.

For example:

Will I always have to take medicine?

What should my blood pressure be?

MY QUESTIONS:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk for heart disease, manage your condition or care for a loved one. Visit heart.org/AnswersByHeart to learn more.