



Occidental College Wellness Newsletter

February 2021

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States, but there's a lot you can do to prevent it. Taking time to care for your heart can be challenging as you go about daily life. But it's easier than you think to show your heart the love it deserves each day. Small acts of self-care, like taking walks, getting quality sleep, and cooking healthy meals, help your heart. Research shows that self-care can help you keep your blood pressure in a healthy range and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

What parts of your self-care routine help your heart?

Self-care for your heart is really self-care for your whole self. You can improve and protect your health overall when you:

- Get a daily dose of [physical activity](#), such as a brisk, 30-minute walk.
- Cook meals that are low in sodium and unhealthy fats.
- Take your medications as prescribed and keep your medical appointments.
- Sleep 7-8 hours a night.
- Manage stress through, for example, meditation, yoga, a warm bath, or quiet time with a good book or funny movie.
- Try to reach or stay at a healthy weight by moving more and having snacks like fruits and veggies ready to grab when hunger hits.

How can you make self-care for your heart easier?

The trick is to plan ahead. Build heart-healthy activities into your daily self-care routine. Schedule things that are both good for you and important to you. You might want to set aside time to:

- Cook delicious, heart-healthy recipes. Choose some from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's delicious heart-healthy eating [website](#).
- Go for a bike ride, take an online exercise class, or have a family dance party.
- Make that doctor's appointment you've been putting off. Many providers now offer telehealth appointments to make accessing care easier.
- Organize your medications.



What is your health status?

Part of self-care is knowing your health status. Even during uncertain and busy times, get your blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels checked. [Keeping a log](#) will help you stay on a heart-healthy track. Talk to your health care provider about your heart health.

Seeking heart disease care

Cardiovascular disease remains the No. 1 cause of death in the U.S., and fear of the COVID-19 virus should not prevent you from seeking the care you need for new or unusual symptoms. Hospitals and providers remain available and can protect you from virus exposure within the hospital. If you are unwell, do not be afraid to contact your provider by phone. If you need emergency care, you should call 911 and go to the Emergency Department right away.

Recipe

Valentine Fruit and Veggie Jello Snack

Prep Time: 20 minutes | **Cook Time:** 5 minutes | **Chilling:** 2 hours

Servings: 20

Ingredients

- ½ cup orange juice
- 2-3 cups baby spinach leaves
- 3 cups raspberries (strawberries can be substituted)
- ¼ cup agave syrup (honey or sugar in same amount can be substituted)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 5 packets unflavored gelatin



Instructions

1. Pour juice, spinach and raspberries into high power blender/food processor. Blend until smooth.
2. Pour berry mixture into a saucepan. Add in agave, vanilla, and gelatin packets.
3. Heat over a medium-high heat until gelatin is completely dissolved (3 to 5 minutes).
4. Line a 9X13 inch baking sheet pan with parchment paper.
5. Pour fruit mixture onto pan and spread evenly with spatula.
6. Let cool and refrigerate 2 hours until set.
7. Cut into heart shapes (or other desired shapes) and serve.
8. Store in the refrigerator, stacked between sheets of parchment paper, in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

Nutrition Facts

Calories: 18kcal | Carbohydrates: 3g | Sodium: 4mg | Potassium: 56mg | Fiber: 1g
Sugar: 2g | Vitamin A: 445IU | Vitamin C: 7.3mg | Calcium: 9mg | Iron: 0.2mg

References: [NHLBI](#), [health.gov](#), [myplate.gov](#), [foodmeanderings.com](#)