

Health & Wellness

February
2025
Issue 5

Heart Health As We Age

This month's health and wellness education is all about heart health! We'll go over how the heart functions, how your heart changes as you age, how to avoid heart disease and complications, and more.



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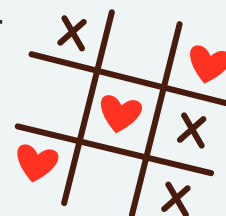
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Welcome to DuPage Senior Citizens Council/Kane Senior Council's February Health & Wellness Newsletter!

We're here to bring you a new topic relating to wellness as well as new brain teasers, seasonal recipes, book recommendations, and more!



Providing Meals and More...



DuPage Senior
Citizens Council



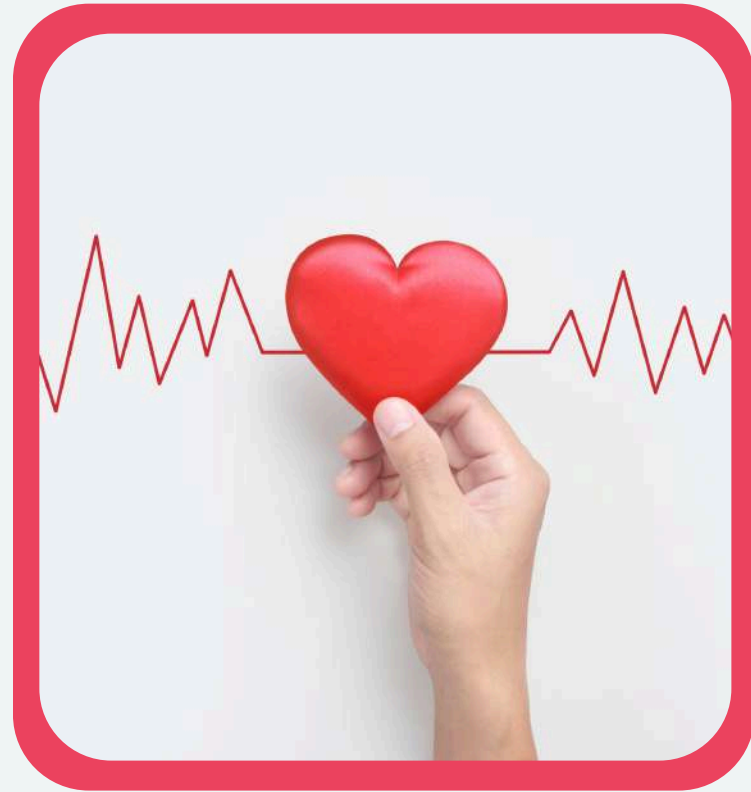
Kane Senior
Council

Health & Wellness Education

Heart Health As We Age

Introduction

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women, but there is a lot you can do to protect your heart and stay healthy.



The older we get, the more our body wants to slow down. This affects all parts of our body including our heart. Keeping our hearts **strong** and **healthy** will ensure good health throughout our lives.

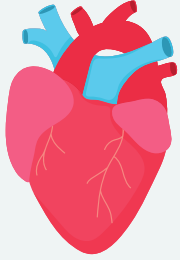
Information adapted from:

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/heart-health/heart-health-and-aging>

How

does the



Heart

Work?

Your heart is a muscle that pumps blood to your body.

A **normal, healthy adult heart** is about the size of a **clenched fist**. Just like an engine makes a car go, the heart keeps your body running.

Different parts of the heart have different functions:

The Left Side

Receives **oxygen-rich blood** from the **lungs** and pumps it through **arteries** throughout the body

The Right Side

Pumps blood **to the lungs** to pick up **oxygen**

An electrical system in the heart controls the **heart rate** (heartbeat or pulse) and coordinates the **contraction** of the heart's **top and bottom chambers**

How your Heart Changes with Age

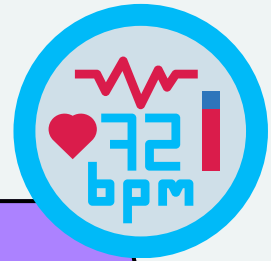
As you get older, your heart can't beat as fast during **physical activity** or times of **stress**.



However, a person's **resting heart rate*** does not change significantly with normal aging.

You may feel a **fluttering in your chest** or have the feeling that your heart is **skipping a beat** or beating too hard.

Occasional extra or skipped heartbeats may occur more often with increased age and are **not dangerous**.



More frequent and/or persistent feelings that your heart is fluttering or racing may be signs of a **heart rhythm abnormality (arrhythmia)**, which may require treatment.

***Resting heart rate** - the number of heartbeats per minute at rest

How Your **Heart** Changes with Age (cont.)

Over time, the chambers of your heart may **increase in size**. The heart wall **thickens**, so the amount of blood that a chamber can hold may **decrease**, despite the increased overall heart size.

Increased thickness of the **heart wall** can increase the risk of **atrial fibrillation**, a common heart rhythm problem in older people that can increase the risk of a stroke.

The valves that control blood flow between the chambers of the heart may become **thicker** and **stiffer**. Stiffer valves can limit the flow of blood out of the heart or become **leaky**, both of which can cause fluid to build up in the lungs or in the legs, feet, and abdomen.



Aging causes changes in the heart and blood vessels.

Changes in the heart and blood vessels that happen with age may increase a person's risk of heart disease and related health problems.

Heart muscle: The heart muscle may thicken, and the amount of blood the can hold may decrease. The heart muscle cells may also degenerate slightly.

Heart valves: The valves that control blood flow may thicken and stiffen, which can cause a heart murmur.

Blood clots: There may be an increased tendency to form blood clots.

Other changes that occur with aging include:

- Abnormal heart rhythms, such as atrial fibrillation, may become more common
- The electrocardiogram (ECG) of a healthy older person may be slightly different from that of a healthy younger adult

Risk Factors of Heart Disease

Each risk factor increases your chance of developing heart disease. The more risks you have, the higher your overall risk.

- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Overweight or obese
- Prediabetes or diabetes
- Smoker
- Inadequate physical activity
- Family history of early onset heart disease
- History of ***preeclampsia****
- Unhealthy eating behaviors
- For women: age 55 or older
- For men: age 45 or older

Heart disease is a major cause of disability that can **limit activity** and erode **quality of life** for older people.

Talk with a doctor if you have any concerns about your heart as you age.

***Preeclampsia** - a condition that occurs during pregnancy in which there is a sudden rise in blood pressure and too much protein in the urine

3 Ways to Avoid Heart Complications

1. Eating Healthy

Foods to Eat:



- Vegetables such as leafy greens (spinach, collard greens, kale, cabbage), broccoli, and carrots
- Fruits such as apples, bananas, oranges, pears, grapes, and prunes

- Whole grains such as plain oatmeal, brown rice, and whole-grain bread or tortillas
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy foods such as milk, cheese, or yogurt



- Protein-rich foods
- Fish high in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, tuna, and trout)
- Lean meats such as 95% lean ground beef or pork tenderloin or skinless chicken or turkey
- Eggs

- Nuts such as walnuts, almonds, and pine nuts
- Nut and seed butters
- Seeds (sesame, sunflower, pumpkin, or flax)
- Legumes such as kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas, black-eyed peas, and lima beans



- Avocados
- Soy products (tofu)
- Oils and foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (canola oil, corn oil, olive oil, safflower oil, sesame oil, sunflower oil, soybean oil)

1. Eating Healthy

A heart-healthy eating plan limits sodium (salt), saturated fat, added sugars, and alcohol

Limit Sodium

Adults should eat **less than 2,300 milligrams** of sodium a day. If you have high blood pressure, you may need to limit sodium even more.

Try these shopping and cooking tips to help you choose and prepare foods that are lower in sodium

- Read **food labels** and choose products that have **less sodium** for the **same serving size**.
- Choose low-sodium, reduced-sodium, or **no-salt-added** products.
- Choose **fresh, frozen, or no-salt-added foods** instead of pre-seasoned, sauce-marinated, brined, or processed meats, poultry, and vegetables.
- Eat at home more often so you can cook food from scratch, which will allow you to **control the amount of sodium** in your meals.
- Flavor foods with **herbs and spices** instead of salt.
- When cooking, limit your use of **premade** sauces, mixes, and **instant products** such as rice, noodles, and ready-made pasta.

Limit Saturated Fats

Saturated or “bad” fats come from **animal sources** such as butter, cheese, and fatty meats. They should make up **less than 10%** of your **daily calories**.

Unsaturated fats are also known as “good” fats and are found in vegetable oils and nuts.

- Read food labels and choose foods that are **lower** in **saturated fats** and **higher** in **unsaturated fats**.
- Eat **leaner, lower-fat**, and **skinless meats** instead of fatty cuts of meat and chicken with skin.
- Consume **lower-fat dairy products** instead of whole-milk.
- Use certain **vegetable oils** (such as olive and canola oil) instead of butter, lard, and coconut and palm oils.

Limit Added Sugars

You should limit the **amount of calories** you get each day from added sugars. This will help you choose **nutrient-rich** foods and stay within your **daily calorie limit**.

Some foods, such as fruit, contain **natural sugars**.

Added sugars **do not occur naturally** in foods but instead are used to sweeten foods and drinks.

Snacks and sweets include grain-based desserts such as cakes, pies, cookies, brownies, doughnuts; dairy desserts such as ice cream, frozen desserts, and pudding; candies; sugars; jams; syrups; and sweet toppings.

1. Eating Healthy

Lower how much sugar you eat or drink

- Choose drinks without added sugar such as water, low-fat or fat-free milk, or 100% vegetable juice.
- Choose **unsweetened** foods for snacks or dessert.
- Consume sweetened drinks, snacks, and desserts less often and in **smaller amounts**.
- Limit alcohol

Limit Alcohol

Talk to your healthcare provider about how much alcohol you drink. They may recommend that you **reduce the amount of alcohol** you drink or that you stop drinking alcohol.

Alcohol can:

- Add calories to your daily diet and possibly cause you to gain weight
- Raise your blood pressure and levels of triglyceride fats in your blood
- Contribute to or worsen heart failure in some people, such as some people who have cardiomyopathy
- Raise your risk of other diseases such as cancer

3 Ways to Avoid Heart Complications

Regular physical activity can:

- Help you lose excess weight
- Improve physical fitness
- Help lower many heart disease risk factors such as **“bad” LDL cholesterol** levels, increase **“good” HDL cholesterol** levels, and manage **high blood pressure**
- Lower stress and improve your mental health
- Lower your risk for **other conditions** such as type 2 diabetes, depression, and cancer

2. Get Regular Physical Activity

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise benefits your **heart** and **lungs** the most. This is any exercise in which your heart beats faster and you use more oxygen than usual, such as brisk walking, running, biking, and swimming. Participate in aerobic exercise for at least a **few minutes** at a time throughout the week.

Talk With Your Doctor

Talk with your healthcare provider before you start a new exercise plan. Discuss **how much** and **what types** of physical activity are safe for you. Even **modest amounts** of physical activity are good for your health.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that each week, older adults get at least:

150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity

Some physical activity is better than *none*!

3 Ways to Avoid Heart Complications

3. Manage Stress

Research suggests that an emotionally upsetting event, particularly one involving anger, can serve as a **trigger** for a heart attack or angina in some people. Stress can contribute to **high blood pressure** and other **heart disease risk factors**. Some of the ways people cope with stress - drinking alcohol, using other substances, smoking or overeating - are not healthy ways to manage stress.

Learning how to **manage stress** and **cope with problems** can improve your mental and physical health

Ask your healthcare provider what kinds of **stress management activities** are safe for you

Consider healthy **stress-reducing activities** such as:

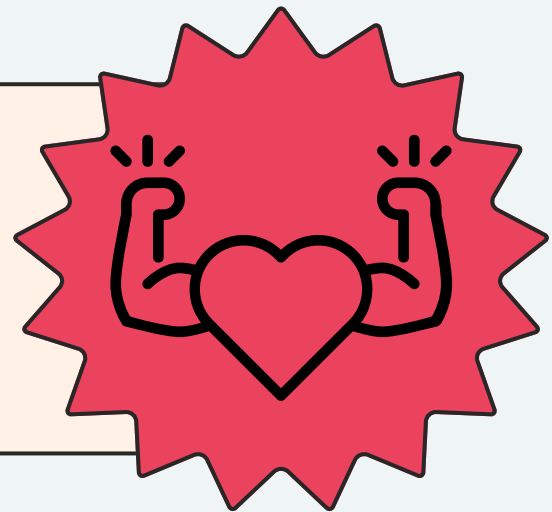
- Talking to a professional counselor
- Participating in a stress management program
- Practicing meditation
- Being physically active
- Trying relaxation techniques
- Talking with friends, family, and community or religious support systems

WRAP UP

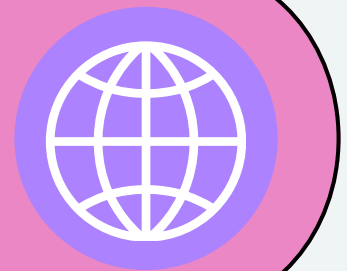


Our heart is a very important organ in our body and taking care of it is a must!

Knowing what weakens it and what strengthens it is key to a healthy heart.



For more health and wellness tips, information and resources, visit our website.

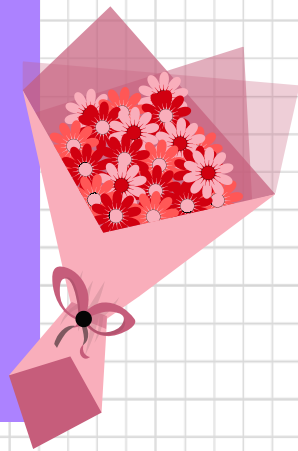


BRAIN BOOSTERS

SUDOKU

		5	1	4				8
3		8					7	1
	1			7	8		4	
					1	8		6
	2		8		9		3	
8		7	4					
	3		5	9			8	
7	8					3		4
6				8	4	7		

Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contain all of the digits 1 thru 9.



RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

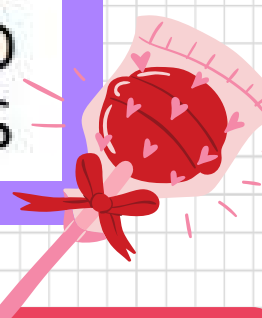
What has a heart that doesn't beat?



WORD SEARCH



D F I G Z I V A L V E S V X N
 O N I M X N X C S T R E S S W
 Z N D T E A R R H Y T H M I A
 H S I E N C I G M J A J Z R F
 A A E X C E Q Q T W U T E S H
 G J T N G W S L F F P F X U E
 I D C L M C X S D G Q H X G A
 N E C F E X E R C I S E M A R
 G C O G N B H Y E D H S S R T
 F K G M F V R N D H G T O S S
 C H O L E S T E R O L R D V K
 J X C R H E A L T H W O I F O
 F W N V H L X P C M L K U O K
 K J R Q E H G U J Q D E M H D
 X E C F A A N A R T E R I E S



WORD BANK

Cholesterol	Arrhythmia	Fitness	Exercise	Sodium
Arteries	Valves	Stress	Health	Diet
Stroke	Aging	Sugars	Heart	

Our Picks of the Month

February Recipe: Linguine With Clams, Parsley & Lemon

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 pound linguine
- 1/2 cup roughly chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 3 pounds fresh Manila clams or small littleneck clams, rinsed several times in cold water
- Red pepper flakes, to taste



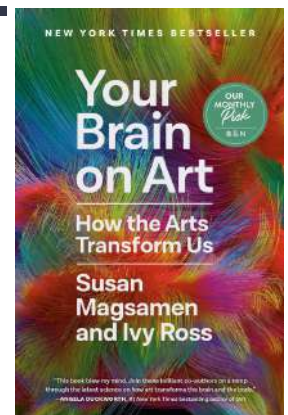
Directions:

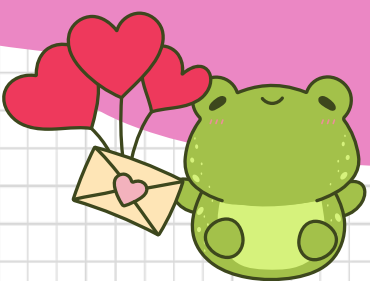
1. Heat oil in a heavy large pot over medium-high heat. Add sliced garlic and sauté until light brown, a little less than 1 minute. Add clams and 1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley; stir 2 minutes. Add wine; simmer 2 minutes. Add fresh lemon juice. Cover and simmer until clams open, about 6 minutes. Discard any clams that do not open.
2. Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite. Reserve about a cup of the pasta water. Drain pasta.
3. Add pasta to clam mixture and toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and red pepper flakes, if using. Add pasta water in small increments as needed. Transfer to a large bowl. Sprinkle with remaining parsley.

Our Book Pick of the Month

Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us by Susan Magsamen, Ivy Ross

“Practical, comprehensive and essential, *Your Brain on Art* is ripe with insight. If you ever wanted to truly understand what art can do for the world, let this book be your guide.”





ANSWER KEY

9	7	5	1	4	3	2	6	8
3	4	8	6	2	5	9	7	1
2	1	6	9	7	8	5	4	3
4	9	3	7	5	1	8	2	6
5	2	1	8	6	9	4	3	7
8	6	7	4	3	2	1	9	5
1	3	4	5	9	7	6	8	2
7	8	9	2	1	6	3	5	4
6	5	2	3	8	4	7	1	9

Riddle Answer:

What has a heart that doesn't beat?

Answer : An Artichoke





ANSWER KEY

D F I G Z I V A L V E S V X N
O N I M X N X C S T R E S S W
Z N D T E A R R H Y T H M I A
H S I E N C I G M J A J Z R F
A A E X C E Q Q T W U T E S H
G J T N G W S L F F P F X U E
I D C L M C X S D G Q H X G A
N E C F E X E R C I S E M A R
G C O G N B H Y E D H S S R T
F K G M F V R N D H G T O S S
C H O L E S T E R O L R D V K
J X C R H E A L T H W O I F O
F W N V H L X P C M L K U O K
K J R Q E H G U J Q D E M H D
X E C F A A N A R T E R I E S





DuPage Senior
Citizens Council

Providing Meals and More...



Kane Senior
Council

From the Council

News & Events

FEBRUARY

12

Community Dining “Love is in the Air” Event

11 am - 12 pm

Aurora Senior Services Associates

2111 Plum St. Aurora, IL 60506

To RSVP: Call 630-642-8441

by February 5

FEBRUARY

17

Sites Closed For President's Day:

**Bloomington, Lombard, Glendale Heights,
and Downers Grove Township**

All sites will reopen on February 18th

Print Monthly Meal Menus at:

www.DuPageSeniorCouncil.org/Home-Delivered-Meals-Menus

www.KaneSeniorCouncil.org/Meals-On-Wheels



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