February is American Heart Month Your body's powerhouse: The Heart

Located behind the breastbone and in the middle of the rib cage, the heart is the body's most protected organ. This little powerhouse pumps 2,000 gallons of blood through the circulatory system each day by expanding and contracting more than 100,000 times. In the average human lifetime, it beats 2.5 billion times.

In fact, since the 1990s, scientists have understood that the heart has a cluster of 40,000 neurons that communicate with parts of the brain and may even be involved in pain, according to Pubmed. This so-called heart brain works with the brain in ways that are still being researched, but even now, it's clear that the body's organs are connected in an intricate system.

We aren't generally aware of the efforts, and struggles, of our heart, but we can do some things to help it keep healthy, according to the American Heart Association.

Decide now what your risk factors are and what you can do about them. You can't control your age or family history, but there are risk factors you can control:

* Quit smoking. Smoking is one of the most harmful things you can do to your heart.
* Control your blood pressure and take prescribed medications.
* Manage your weight. Gradual weight loss, followed by a stable healthy weight, can help decrease your risks for cardiovascular complications.
* Eat better. Lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains combine to make weight loss easier and can help lower cholesterol.
* Get out and about. Brisk walks are great exercise. A combination of vigorous activity, resistance training and flexibility exercise is better. It helps your heart, controls your weight and makes you look and feel good.
* Don't be jaded. You have heard this advice before. Act on it.

Our program for January cancelled out on us at the last minute. However "Walton Options" will try again as they are rescheduled for our 11:00 AM meeting on February 24, 2023. They have offices in Augusta, North Augusta and Walterboro, serving the counties of Edgefield, Aiken, McCormick and Barnwell.

Certified Visitors, Chris Maxwell, Sam Huff, Doris Foster, Diane Traub and Jack Grados have accomplished the following during only a few weeks in 2022 - 25 family visits, 197 patient visits and have distributed 200 heart Guides along with other appropriate pamphlets. This group is doing a wonderful job but more volunteers would be welcomed with open arms.

Aiken Regional Medical Centers newest Thoracic Surgeon, Dr. William H. Risher, looks forward to speaking at one of our monthly meetings. Chris Maxwell, Chapter 294 Vice president and Program Chairman is coordinating this future event, developing a time convenient to Dr. Risher who comes to Aiken via Louisiana State University School of Medicine, Tulane University and University of New Orleans.

The Chapter welcomed Mac Hanna who looks forward to joining our chapter and becoming a member. He is most interested in Visiting Cardiac Patients at ARMC.
## Fluffy water

### Across
1. Dejected
4. Inside info
9. A Beatle bride
10. Clear the blackboard
11. W.C.
12. Actress Oberon
13. Famous evolutionist
15. Operating
16. "60 Minutes" correspondent
18. 3.1416
20. Hairy
23. Recipe direction
25. Tire filler
26. "Fiddler on the Roof" role
27. Schuss
28. Internet messages
29. French beverage

1. Auctioneer's closing
2. Water buffalo
3. Entryways
4. Tournament round
5. Battlement feature
6. Henley need
7. Nobel Peace Prize city
8. Hammer part
14. Yellowstone sight
17. Sunday fare
18. Sign on a ticket

### Down
19. Footnote word
21. Punjabi believer
22. Ashtabula's lake
24. Some forensic evidence

---

### Wisdom from The Golden Girls

**People waste their time pondering whether a glass is half empty or half full. Me, I just drink whatever's in the glass. Sophia (Estelle Getty)**

My mother used to say: The older you get, the better you get. Unless you're a banana. Rose (Betty White)

No matter how bad things get, remember these sage words: You're old, you sag, get over it. Sophia (Estelle Getty)

You know what they say: You can lead a herring to water, but you have to walk really fast or he'll die. Rose (Betty White)

You know my motto. Today could be the last day of your life. Sophia (Estelle Getty)

The bottom line is, in life, sometimes good things happen, sometimes bad things happen. But honey, if you don't take a chance, nothing happens. Dorothy (Bea Arthur)

Everyone wants someone to grow old with, and shouldn't everyone have that chance? Sophia (Estelle Getty)

How come whenever my ship comes in it's leaking? Dorothy (Bea Arthur)

Why do blessings wear disguises? If I were a blessing, I'd run around naked. Sophia (Estelle Getty)

I eat raw cookie dough. And occasionally, I run through the sprinklers and don't wear a bathing cap. And at Christmas, I've been known to put away more than one eggnog. Rose (Betty White)

Look, you didn't ask me for my opinion, but I'm old, so I'm giving it anyway. Sophia (Estelle Getty)
Remember these toys? Somehow we survived

The toys of our childhoods were simple, usually required imagination, and some were let's face it -- downright dangerous.

When you look at this list of common toys, you might ask yourself: How did we survive?

Lawn darts, sometimes called jarts: A game that involved 12-inch weighted and sharpened metal darts. Toss the dart in the target on the ground and you got a point. Problem is that they were dangerous. At least 1,000 serious injuries and three deaths were attributed to the game. By 1988, they were banned.

Chemistry sets: Sold since at least 1845, the sets contained increasingly dangerous substances. Most chemicals were harmless, but some contain sodium cyanide, a poison. In the 1950s, atomic sets contained radioactive uranium (Fun for the whole family!). Glassblowing sets came with blowtorches. They were actually instrumental in the careers of some scientists. But by the 1970s, most were banned.

Clackers (early versions): Although still sold with different materials, these were heavy balls on each end of a string. In the 1960s and early 1970s, these toys were fun, but painful. The goal was to swing them up and down so that the balls on each end of a string clacked together. If you missed, woe to you. In 1968, tempered glass spheres would eventually shatter, sending glass shards everywhere. Today's models are lighter weight plastic.

Then there were a whole class of toy guns that were foundational to childhood such as cap guns, BB guns and spud guns.

Medicare: Ask the expert

I am going to retire soon. Can you give me some basic info on Medicare Part A?

Part A is hospital insurance. Most Americans get this at no cost. You should sign up for this as soon as you are eligible. There is a $1,600 deductible for each hospital visit in 2023.

Generally, Part A covers 80 percent of an inpatient hospital stays after the deductible.

When you sign up for Part A, you also sign up for Part B which covers doctor and outpatient care. A fee for this is deducted from your Social Security check.

You will also have a choice to sign up for a Medicare Advantage plan instead of Original Medicare (Part A and B). This is private insurance that covers at least as much as Medicare, but could be less expensive.

Everything has a season -- including heart attacks, which are more common during the winter.

According to the American Heart Association, even regions with mild climates see spikes in heart attacks during the winter months. As winter continues during American Heart Month, everyone should take stock of their risk factors and lifestyle and take steps to protect themselves.

According to Northwestern Medicine, the biggest risk factor is the cold, which causes blood vessels to contract and can raise blood pressure. Meanwhile, the heart works even harder to maintain body temperature. When body temperature falls below 95 degrees Fahrenheit, the resulting hypothermia can also lead to heart damage. By dressing for the weather with coats, hats, gloves and socks, you can also protect your heart.

Lifestyle factors can also increase risk. For many, shoveling or walking through snow are more strenuous than their usual activities, and the sudden increase in workload can add additional strain on the heart. Stay home if necessary and don't be afraid to ask for help clearing your sidewalk or driveway.

Emotional stress may also contribute to the winter heart attack spike. Practice self-care to help you manage your stress and seek help if necessary.

The most important tip: Year-round good habits, like regular exercise and eating a heart-healthy diet. Start now and be ready when the next cold season rolls in.

Flowers by the numbers

In 2022, lovers and friends spent more than $2.3 billion on flowers for Valentine's Day, according to Statista, the equivalent of the all-time high in 2020. In 2010, consumers spent $1.7 billion on flowers, a number that remained relatively stable until 2015, when expenditures broke the $2 billion mark. Roses, particularly red, are the favorite flowers of Valentine's Day, a holiday second only to Mother's Day for gifting flowers. Up to 250 million roses are grown for Valentine's Day and 73 percent of the givers are men.
Old-Fashioned Vegetable-Barley Soup

Ingredients
Servings 4
Serving Size 1 1/4 cups

- Cooking spray
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium rib of celery, chopped
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- 1 14.5-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 1/2 cups frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 1/2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 cup chopped kale
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup uncooked quick-cooking barley
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil, crumbled
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon shredded or grated Parmesan cheese

Directions
1) Lightly spray a large Dutch oven with cooking spray. Add the oil, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the onion and celery over medium-high heat until golden, about 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the garlic and cook for 10 seconds.
2) Stir in the remaining ingredients except the Parmesan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the barley is cooked.
3) Ladle into soup bowls. Sprinkle with the Parmesan.

Recipe borrowed from https://recipes.heart.org/en/recipes/old-fashioned-vegetable-barley-soup

National Heart Failure Awareness Week
February 12-18

February 12-18, 2023 is National Heart Failure Awareness Week! Join The Mended Hearts, Inc. and the Heart Failure Society of America HFSA as we promote heart failure awareness, patient education, and heart failure prevention. This year's theme of Heart Success: Function Not Failure will shed light on all that can be done to treat heart failure (HF) based on how a patient's heart is functioning.

Here are some ways you can support the campaign:

1) Learn more about heart failure by browsing our library of resources including discussion guides, a GoToGuide, webinars and personal stories. For more information, go to https://mendedhearts.org/heart-failure/
2) Follow HFSA on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and keep watching for #HFWeek2023, #MyHFStory2023, and #FunctionNotFailure posts!
3) Tune in to a Live Twitter Chat with experts on Wednesday, February 15 at 12:00 PM ET. Join MHI, HFSA and other heart failure-focused organizations on Twitter for a lively discussion on heart failure. The purpose of the chat is to provide healthcare providers and heart failure patients with an overview on the status of heart failure and to discuss ways to improve quality of care and expand heart failure awareness. Follow #HFChat2023 to follow the conversation.
4) Listen to a NEW episode of the Heart Failure Beat Healthy Living podcast, set to be released on Thursday, February 16. The episode will feature a discussion on what's new in heart failure care. You won't want to miss this important update!
A FEW SPECIAL DAYS CELEBRATED DURING THIS MONTH
**QUESTION FOR THE MONTH FEBRUARY**

Who sent the first Valentine?

The first Valentine card that was decorated and poetic is attributed to the imprisoned Charles, Duke of Orleans, in 1415. He eased the pain of incarceration by writing love verses to his wife.

By the 1700s, manufactured cards became the most popular way to declare love. The cards were elaborately hand-painted and decorated with gold leaf, satins, silks and exotic feathers.

Retailers now say that chocolates and roses are the best symbols of love. Candy or not, Feb. 14 remains the one day of the year given over to romance.
IMPORTANT MASK POLICY UPDATE
FROM
RHONDA PLATT

Mask Policy Update
Effective 11/30/22 at 12:01 AM

In accordance with CDC and corporate UHS guidance and as community transmission levels continue to be low, we are pleased to share that we are updating our masking guidelines as follows:

- Masks are required by staff, Medical Staff and vendors who are in direct contact with a patient in a clinical care area.

- Visitors are required to wear masks in a patient care area, and masks will continue to be made available to visitors who wish to mask upon entry to the facility.

- Masks must be worn in accordance with staff PPE as required by the infection prevention plan. This includes the following isolation protocols:
  - Contact – MRSA, VR
  - Special Contact – CDiff
  - Droplet – Influenza
  - Airborne – COVID-19, Tuberculosis

FAQs:

1. What is considered "direct contact with a patient in a clinical care area?"
   - If you are in a patient’s room, holding bay, operating room, pre-and-post operative recovery areas, triage, collecting labs or vitals, you are in “direct contact with a patient in a clinical care area.”
   - This includes tending to holds in the Emergency Department

2. Are visitors required to wear a mask?
   - Visitors are required to wear masks in a patient care area.

3. What is considered a patient care area for a visitor?
   - Visitors are to wear masks in patient care areas/units which includes a patient’s room, holding bay or triage area.

4. So, when exactly is it ok to be mask-free?
   - Masks are not required in common areas which include waiting areas, nurses’ stations, lounges, staff rooms, hallways, elevators or stairwells, the cafeteria, offices, or conference areas.
   - No mask is required in photos/videos of staff/events where groups are in hospital common areas: hospital lobby, administration offices, hospital cafeteria, hospital classroom/auditorium, gift shop, physician practices (administration area, lobby).
   - Masks are not required in photos of employees at events removed from the hospital setting: golf tournaments, fundraising galas, health fairs, Chamber of Commerce events, community festivals, local 5K walks, regional job fairs, screening events, senior advantage programs held at the hospital in a common area.

5. What if I prefer to wear a mask while at work?
   - Employees are allowed to choose to continue using source control based on personal preference, informed by their perceived level of risk for infection based on their recent activities (e.g., attending crowded indoor gatherings with poor ventilation) and their potential for developing severe disease.

Per CDC and UHS guidance, we will continue to monitor COVID-19 community transmission levels. If transmission should increase to a higher designation, we will reevaluate our mask policy.