



A HEARTFELT MESSAGE Marilyn Tucker-Viselli, Registered Dietitian

Valentine's Day is a time to celebrate our hearts. Spending time with those we love, sharing meals, giving gifts and....*indulging in sweets!* But our own heart is really our number one Valentine. It's a pump and a muscle that circulates blood and oxygen throughout our body. **Your heart is essential for life.** Treat it with care and nourish it well.

HEART HEALTHY CALCIUM

Calcium is important for muscle contraction and in maintaining the pH of the blood at 7.2. It also helps to **lower blood pressure**. However, avoid calcium supplements because this type of calcium can end up depositing on the walls of your arteries. Instead, choose natural sources of calcium such as dairy products and green leafy vegetables.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Include 2-3 fruits a day plus unlimited vegetables. They contain **phytochemicals** to help keep your heart and arteries healthy. Fruits can be mixed into salads for extra flavor and variety. **A fruit smoothie** with protein powder is a great way to start the day. Fruit is a portable snack. It's easy to carry and requires no refrigeration.

There is no limit on vegetables because they are low in calories. Enjoy them raw or cooked. *Try adding vegetables that taste a little bitter* in your salad such as endives, radicchio, arugula and watercress. They contrast well with sweeter vegetables and provide a nice change from the usual salad fare.

EXERCISE

Aerobic exercise strengthens the heart and helps you lose weight. Whether you use exercise equipment at a gym or at home, play DVD tapes, take walks with friends, participate in group classes or do an individual sport, **exercise should always be fun** and something you look forward to doing.

Regular exercise affects every organ of the body. For beautiful skin, strong bones and a trim waist, exercise at least **150 minutes three times a week**.



BENEFITS OF CHOCOLATE

Dark chocolate has a beneficial affect on the arteries by allowing blood to circulate freely throughout the body especially to the heart, brain and skin. It may also interact with hormones to decrease insulin resistance, a factor in developing type 2 Diabetes.

Enjoy chocolate this Valentine's Day but do so in moderation. It's a high calorie food when eaten in excess. *One ounce of dark chocolate (70-85% cocoa) contains 170 calories.* A

1.5 ounce milk chocolate *Hershey Bar* contains 220 calories.

Get the good flavor of chocolate without the calories. Try one ounce of a liquified chocolate product called *Cholaca* for only 40 calories. Add it to flavored yogurt, coffee, milk or fruit for a delicious low calorie treat. As an alternative, add unsweetened cocoa powder to yogurt or milk as well. Yes, it's possible to *enjoy chocolate without all the calories!*

A REGISTERED DIETITIAN IS YOUR NUTRITION EXPERT

*A Registered Dietitian has been professionally-trained to develop diets that are individualized, flexible and easy-to follow. Although good eating habits should begin in childhood, anyone can choose to change their diet at any time. It's never too late. **Start eating a well-balanced diet today.***

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Marilyn Tucker-Viselli, MS, RDN, CDE

*is a Registered Dietitian in private practice with a Masters Degree from Columbia University. An experienced teacher, lecturer and **Certified Diabetes Educator**, she specializes in weight reduction, general nutrition, diabetes management, Celiac disease, wheat sensitivity and irritable bowel syndrome.*

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BLACK BEAN BROWNIES

(makes 16 servings)

1 15 ounce can of black beans drained and rinsed

3 large eggs

3 tablespoons oil

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

pinch of salt

1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, equally divided

Prepare as follows:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

Lightly oil an 8" x 8" baking pan with non-stick cooking spray and set aside.

Place black beans in a food processor and process until smooth and creamy.

Add eggs, oil, sugar, cocoa powder, vanilla extract, baking powder and salt.

Process until smooth*

Add 1/4 cup of chocolate chips and pulse a few times until chips are mixed in.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan.

Smooth the top with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon.

Sprinkle the remaining 1/4 cup of chocolate chips on top.

Bake 30-40 minutes or until the edges pull away from the sides of the pan and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Cool in pan about 30 minutes.

Cut into two inch squares.

*You can also use a blender instead of a food processor to puree ingredients. Gently mix in chocolate chips with a wooden spoon.

NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS PER SERVING

Calories	123
Protein	3 g
Fat	2 g
Carbohydrate	16 g
Fiber	2 g

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