

February 2024

American Heart Month

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Non-Metro New Mexico Area Agency on Aging

Nutrition Corner

We see “hearts” everywhere in February! The word “heart” can be used in many different ways: to refer to a person’s character (“She has a good heart.”), being in the center (“They are in the heart of the city.”), or having courage, determination, or hope (“You’re doing great, don’t lose heart.”). In our Senior Centers, let’s focus on the number one meaning of the word “heart”: **the organ in your chest that sends blood to other parts of your body.** This is an opportunity to educate our older adults on keeping their hearts healthy.

THE HEART'S JOB

The heart has a very important job! It is responsible for circulating blood through the body. Oxygen-rich blood is delivered to cells from the arteries. Veins carry the blood back to the heart and lungs where it picks up a fresh supply of oxygen.

Risk Factors for Heart Disease

Just like other muscles in our body, the heart changes as we age. The seniors who come into your center may also have other risk factors such as:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Overweight/Obesity

These particular risk factors can be changed by developing a healthy eating pattern (diet), controlling weight, and getting physical exercise. We should also find ways to address stress, get plenty of sleep, limit or avoid alcohol and/or smoking, and choose nutrient-rich foods.

Heart Healthy

Let's encourage our Seniors to follow the American Heart Association's guidelines:

- Maintain a health body weight
- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Choose whole grains
- Choose healthy oils such as olive oil
- Choose healthy sources of protein, such as from plants, seafood, or lean meats
- Minimize added sugars and salt
- Limit or avoid alcohol
- Choose minimally processed foods
- Replace full-fat dairy with nonfat or low-fat dairy



What we choose to eat can influence our heart health including blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and inflammation. Also, heart-healthy habits such as regular exercise and stress management are important for overall well-being.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/heart-healthy-foods-what-to-eat-and-what-to-avoid>

Warm Squash & Quinoa Salad

Yield: 6 servings

Serving Size: 1 cup (1/2 quinoa, 1/2c Squash, .5oz Cheese)

Ingredients:

- 2 cups quinoa, rinsed
- 3 teaspoons ground cumin
- 3 cups water
- 2 TBSP neutral oil
- 3 1/2 cups cubed, peeled butternut squash (can use frozen)
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese



Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, combine quinoa, cumin and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, until liquid is absorbed, 10-13 minutes. Remove from heat; keep warm.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat oil until hot over medium-low heat. Stir in squash and seasonings; cook, covered, until tender, 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add to quinoa, stirring gently to combine. Top with cheese.

(Adapted from Taste of Home)

This recipe is a basic quinoa recipe. There are many ways to add extra flavor and nutrition:

Fruit: chopped apple, mandarin oranges, or dried cranberries.

Beans: black beans, garbanzos,

Veggies: kale, diced tomatoes, onion, peppers, mushroom, sweet potatoes, canned pumpkin.

THIS RECIPE HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE WEBSITE:

www.nonmetroaaa.com

Click on "Provider Portal" for all updated recipes.

Quinoa Facts

- There are more than 120 varieties of quinoa (white, red, black)
- 1 cup of Quinoa has 8 grams of protein and 5 grams of fiber
- A little Quinoa goes a long way! 1 cup of dry Quinoa yields 3 cups of cooked
- Quinoa may help lower cholesterol and help with digestion
- Some compounds found in Quinoa have anti-inflammatory qualities
- Quinoa is naturally gluten-free
- It is packed with vitamins and minerals such as folate, potassium, iron, and magnesium.
- Quinoa is easy to make and can be easily combined with other foods such as fruits, vegetables, or nuts.



<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition>

<https://d14peyhpiu05bf.cloudfront.net/uploads/2020/06/Quinoa.jpg>

Non-Metro New Mexico Area Agency on Aging February Trainings Cleaning and Sanitizing

February 20 @ 2:00 pm (PSA 2)

February 22 @ 2:00 pm (PSA 3)

February 27 @ 2:00 pm (PSA 4)

February 29 @ 2:00 pm (make-up session for all)

Zoom link available on website.

Feel free to join any session.



Try Something New!

Try a new recipe for "Nuevo Thursday" or "Meatless Monday" (or Meatless Friday). Let's share some of your ideas! Email Karen with the approved recipe you tried and the feedback you received from the Seniors at your center, and we will "spotlight" it in our next newsletter. (karenz@ncnmedd.com)