



*Welcome to the February edition of the Health & Safety Newsletter. Since love is typically in the air this month, we concentrate a lot on your heart, offering you some basic knowledge on heart health, some fantastic Valentine's Day tips, Sabrina sends us an awesome lasagna recipe, and we update you on the latest happening from the Events Club. Happy Valentine's Day everyone!*

## Keep Your Heart Healthy - The Basics

You can take steps today to lower your risk of heart disease and heart attack. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in North America.

### To help prevent heart disease, you can:

- Eat healthy and get active.
- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol ("koh-LEHS-tuh-rah") and blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Take steps to prevent type 2 diabetes.
- Manage stress.

### Am I at risk for heart disease?

You are at higher risk for heart disease if:

- You are a woman over age 55
- You are a man over age 45
- Your father or brother had heart disease before age 55
- Your mother or sister had heart disease before age 65
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As you get older, your risk of heart disease and heart attacks increases. But the good news is that heart disease can be prevented.

## What is Heart Disease?

When people talk about heart disease, they are usually talking about coronary heart disease (CHD). It's also called coronary artery disease (CAD). This is the most common type of heart disease.

When someone has CHD, the coronary arteries (tubes) that take blood to the heart are narrow or blocked. This happens when cholesterol and fatty material, called plaque ("plak"), build up inside the arteries.

### Plaque is caused by:

- Fat and cholesterol in the blood
- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Too much sugar in the blood (usually because of diabetes)

When plaque blocks an artery, it's hard for blood to flow to the heart. A blocked artery can cause chest pain or a heart attack.

## What is a Heart Attack?

A heart attack happens when blood flow to the heart is suddenly blocked. Part of the heart may die if the person doesn't get help quickly.





### Common signs of a heart attack include:

- Chest pain (or a feeling like pressure, squeezing, or fullness)
- Pain or discomfort in the upper body, like the arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach above the belly button
- Trouble breathing (while resting or being active)
- Feeling sick to your stomach or throwing up
- Feeling dizzy, light-headed, or unusually tired
- Breaking out in a cold sweat

Not everyone who has a heart attack will have all the signs.

### Don't Ignore Changes in How you Feel?

Signs of a heart attack often come on suddenly. But sometimes, they develop slowly – hours, days, or even weeks before a heart attack happens.

Talk to your doctor if you feel tired for several days, or if other health problems (like pain or trouble breathing) bother you more than usual.

Call 911 right away if you or someone else might be having a heart attack.

Don't ignore any signs or feel embarrassed to call for help. Acting fast can save a life. Call 911 even if you are not sure it's a heart attack.

An ambulance is the best and safest way to get to the hospital. In an ambulance, EMTs (emergency medical technicians) can check how you are doing and start life-saving medicines and other treatments right away.

People who call an ambulance often get treated faster at the hospital. And, if you call 911, the operator can tell you what to do until the ambulance gets there.

### Valentines Day Heart Health:

On February 14, millions will have a romantic night on the town packed with food that's no good for their heart, followed by heart-shaped boxes of candy and chocolate. But, instead of supplying your sweetheart with unhealthy gifts this Valentine's Day, why not tend to their actual heart? There is possibly no better way to honor your commitment to someone than doing something that adds to a long, happy, and healthy life. Here are five ways to show you care about your loved one's heart.

1. Give the gift of quality time. Plan a fun activity for you and your partner. Enjoy being outdoors? Go for a moonlit run, or bundle up and go ice skating, snowshoeing, or skiing. If you aren't a fan of the cold, try an indoor activity like rock climbing or take a partner yoga class. End the day with a couples massage. Either way, you will have a great time together, and you just might burn a few extra calories.
2. Give the gift of giving back. Ask a date, friend, or family member to volunteer with you at your favorite local charity. Volunteering is one of the best ways to recognize and appreciate the gifts in your own life. Giving back helps boost your mood and eliminate stress, not to mention you are making the day special for someone else in need.
3. Set a 'table for two' at home Plan a romantic dinner at home. Better yet, cook the meal together!





Most restaurants will be crowded, expensive, and unhealthy. Choose a meal you will both enjoy and share the cooking duties. Who says an apron can't be sexy? Enjoy your heart-healthy meal by candlelight and enjoy some quality alone time.

4. Do something sweet. Valentine's Day is a perfect time to do something sweet for your partner, both in sentiment and with a delicious dessert. Instead of candy or a treat that is a "heart attack on a plate", give your partner a fruit basket and share it over dark chocolate fondue. Share your appreciation, love, and support for your partner while enjoying this healthier, yet scrumptious treat.

5. Just move. After a candlelit dinner, invite your loved one to dance. Pick your favorite song and get moving. Choose a slow song to enjoy an intimate moment, or choose a fast song and let go, have fun, and get your heart rate up. This will encourage a few laughs as well! If you aren't up for dancing, go for a stroll. Not only will this precious time give you a chance to chat without distractions, but you will burn some extra calories to boot. It has been proven that moving after a meal improves digestion and re-energizes the body.

So this Valentine's Day, here's to taking care of our loved ones and ourselves!

**EVENTS CLUB – TUBING AT MANNING PARK**

The next outing for our Events Club is all set for Saturday, February 22 at 2:00 PM. We will be heading up to Manning Park for an afternoon of tubing! We already have 40+ members and their families signed up so it looks like it will be a great event. Your membership in the Events Club includes admission for 4 to this outing. Not a member yet? An easy \$8 per month payroll deduction gets you admission to this event plus the other ones that we will plan throughout the year. For more info or to sign up, just drop us a line at [healthandsafety@vtlg.com](mailto:healthandsafety@vtlg.com) or stop by and talk to one of the committee members.



## Simple slow-cooked lasagna

Let your slow cooker do the work and come home to this easy, heartwarming meal. Swap in other greens or cooked vegetables to change things up.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 6 to 8 hours on Low, 3 to 4 hours on High

227 g (8 oz) extra lean ground beef  
1 onion, finely chopped  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
10 mL (2 tsp) dried oregano  
1 mL (1/4 tsp) hot pepper flakes  
1 jar (700 mL) tomato passata  
250 mL (1 cup) water  
10 whole wheat lasagna noodles  
1 tub (475 g) light ricotta cheese  
1 container (142 g/5 oz) baby spinach, washed, chopped  
60 mL (1/4 cup) chopped fresh basil or parsley  
30 mL (2 tbsp) grated Parmesan cheese  
125 mL (1/2 cup) shredded part skim mozzarella

1. Lightly spray inside of slow cooker with cooking spray.
2. In a large nonstick skillet, brown beef breaking up with spoon. Scrape out beef into a colander and let drain. Wipe out skillet and return to medium heat; cook beef, onion, garlic, oregano and hot pepper flakes for 5 minutes or until softened. Add passata and water and remove from heat.
3. In a bowl, stir together ricotta cheese, spinach, basil and Parmesan cheese.
4. Spread some of the meat sauce over bottom of slow cooker. Lay lasagna noodles in a single layer, breaking as

necessary to fit. Top with one quarter of the sauce and one third of the cheese mixture. Repeat layers twice ending with meat sauce on top. Cover and cook on Low for 6 to 8 hours or on High for 3 to 4 hours. About 15 minutes before serving lasagna, sprinkle mozzarella over top, cover and let cook on Low until melted.

Makes 8 servings.

Tips:

Run out of fresh basil or parsley? For the fresh basil, sub in 15 mL (1 tbsp) dried basil and for the fresh parsley sub in 30 mL (2 tbsp) dried parsley.

- Swap in lean ground turkey for the ground beef.
- Leftovers make lunch a snap. Add a green salad to round out your meal.

Recipe developed by Emily Richards, P.H. Ec. for Health Canada and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Nutrients Per Serving: 157 calories, 5 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 24 mg cholesterol, 296 mg sodium, 11 g carbohydrate (2 g fibre, 7 g sugar), 19 g protein% DV: 7% total fat (13% sat. fat), 12% sodium, 4% carbohydrate (10% fibre), 24% vitamin A, 18% vitamin C, 16% calcium, 19% iron





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