

A study of people ages 70 and older found walking an additional 500 steps per day, or an additional quarter mile of walking, was associated with a 14% lower risk of heart disease, stroke or heart failure.

– American Heart Association

Heartfelt changes: Small steps for big improvements in heart health

February is Heart Health Month, which is important to everyone as we all strive for ways to remain health. There are several small lifestyle changes that seniors, in particular, can make to improve their heart health and reduce the risk of heart disease. These changes may seem simple, but they can have a significant impact over time.

Get moving! Engaging in regular physical activity, even gentle forms like walking or tai chi, can help improve your cardiovascular health. Going for a walk is a great activity for you and your Assisting Hands caregiver to do together. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-in-

tensity aerobic exercise per week, or as advised by your healthcare provider.

Eat smart. Perhaps the biggest difference you can make is adopting a heart healthy diet. Focus on whole foods by eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein like fish and chicken. Choose foods that are low in saturated fats, trans fats and sodium. Reduce your intake of sugary and process foods.

Portion control is also important. Use smaller plates and

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bowls to help control your portions, and listen to your body's hunger cues.

Stay hydrated. Drinking enough water is important for overall health. Dehydration can put extra strain on the heart. Check with your doctor if you have any medical conditions, or are taking medications in which you should carefully monitor the amount of liquids you take in.

Get plenty of sleep. Aim for 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep per night. Poor quality sleep can contribute to heart problems and may put you at higher risk for Alzheimer's disease, cognitive decline and dementia, depression, diabetes, and obesity.

Stress less! Chronic stress can have a negative impact on heart health, so it's important to manage the stress, and the issues causing it. Practice stress-reduction techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or yoga. Engaging in hobbies that you enjoy can also be a benefit.

If you smoke, quit. Quitting is one of the best things you can do for your heart. Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease, along with oral issues, and it is a known

cause of cancer in any part of the body. It's never too late to quit.

Get regular health check-ups. Stay in touch with your doctor and other healthcare providers and follow their advice. Regular check-ups can identify and manage risk factors for heart disease such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. If you have been prescribed medications for heart-related conditions, make sure you take them as directed.

If you have chronic health conditions such as diabetes or hypertension, it's important to work with your healthcare team to keep them under control.

Stay connected. Maintain social connections with friends and family. Take part in activities that bring you joy. A strong support network and a positive outlook can contribute to better heart health.

Incorporating a few changes at a time can go a long way to maintaining and improving your heart health. It's important to note that before making significant changes to your lifestyle, especially if you have existing medical conditions, consult with your doctor for personalized guidance tailored to your specific needs and abilities.



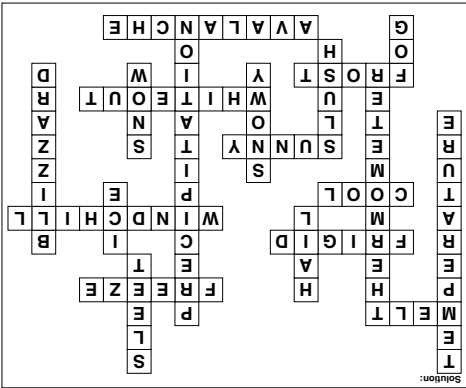
Fun February Facts:

- **Leap Year:** February is the only month that can have either 28 or 29 days. This is because of leap years, which occur every four years to account for the extra fraction of a day in our calendar. Leap years make February 29 days long.
- **Named after Februa:** February's name is derived from the Roman festival of purification called "Februa." It was a time when Romans performed cleansing rituals and made offerings to purify themselves.
- **Birthdays:** February is a popular month for birthdays, with many famous figures born in this month, including George Washington (February 22) and Abraham Lincoln (February 12).
- **The birthstone for February** is amethyst, a purple gemstone believed to promote calmness, balance, and clarity of mind.
- **Groundhog Day:** On February 2nd, Groundhog Day is celebrated in North America. According to folklore, if a

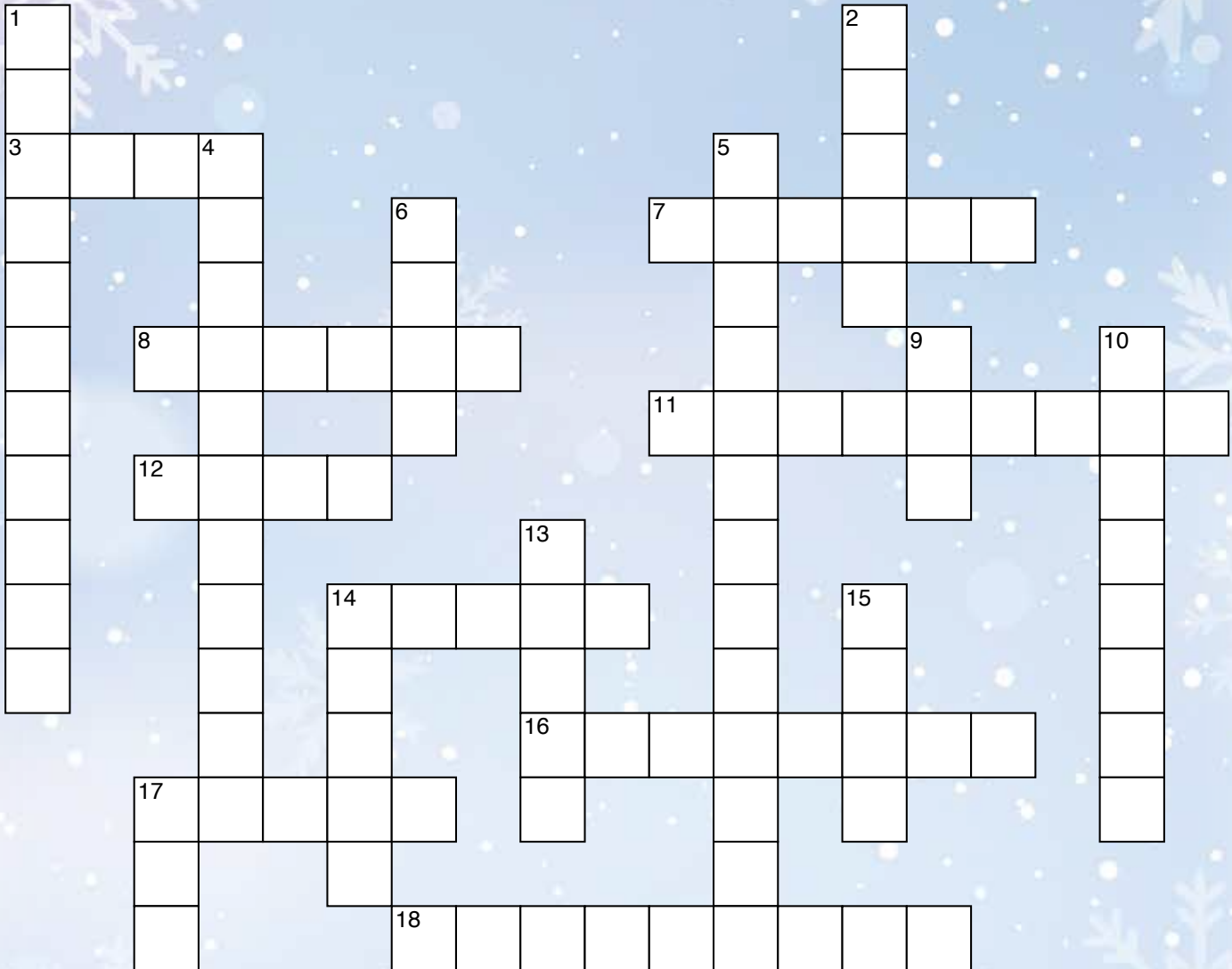
groundhog sees its shadow on this day, there will be six more weeks of winter.

- **Valentine's Day:** February 14th is Valentine's Day, a holiday celebrated in many countries as a day of love and affection. It is customary to exchange cards, chocolates, and gifts with loved ones.
- **Black History Month:** In the United States and Canada, February is designated as Black History Month, a time to celebrate the achievements and contributions of African Americans to society.

- **National Bird-Feeding Month:** In the United States, February is National Bird-Feeding Month, encouraging people to feed and care for wild birds during the winter months.



Winter Weather Words



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

Just for FUN

ACROSS

- 3 The process by which snow or ice changes to water.
- 7 A period of very cold winter weather that damages plants.
- 8 Intensely cold temperature.
- 11 The temperature felt by the human body when wind makes it feel colder than the actual temperature.
- 12 Mildly cold feeling.
- 14 Bright with sunshine.
- 16 Snowfall that is so heavy one can see little or nothing on the horizon.
- 17 Ice crystals on a frozen surface; "Old Jack _____."
- 18 A large mass of snow that slides down a mountain.

DOWN

- 1 A standardized measure of how hot or cold it is outside.
- 2 Rain that freezes as it falls.
- 4 A tool used to measure the temperature.
- 5 Water that falls to the earth in the form of rain, hail, mist, sleet, or snow.
- 6 Pieces of ice falling from the sky.
- 9 A solid form of frozen water.
- 10 A storm with heavy snow, strong winds, and severe cold.
- 13 Covered with snow.
- 14 A mixture of snow and water.
- 15 Precipitation in the form of small white ice crystals that form inside clouds.
- 17 Thick water vapor that makes it hard to see.

Simply Delicious



Hot Honey Bangin' Crunchy Cornflake Baked Chicken

Prep Time: 25 min; **Cook:** 20 min; **Yield:** 6 servings

Ingredients

For the crunchy cornflake coating:

- 6 cups cornflakes
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

For the chicken:

- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons almond milk (or milk of choice)
- 1 1/2-2 pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs

For the hot honey:

- 1/2 cup honey
- 2-3 teaspoons hot sauce (like Cholula)

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
- Add the cornflakes to the bowl of the food processor and pulse until they reach a fine crumb similar to breadcrumbs. Transfer mixture to a medium bowl and whisk in the paprika, onion powder, garlic powder, black pepper and salt until well combined.
- In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the eggs and almond milk. Set aside.
- Line a large baking sheet with an oven safe wire metal rack. Spray with nonstick cooking spray.
- Dip each chicken thigh into the egg mixture, then use a tong to grab each chicken thigh and toss generously into the breadcrumb mixture to completely coat with breadcrumbs. Use tongs to transfer to the wire rack. Repeat with remaining chicken pieces.
- Generously spray the tops of the chicken thighs with nonstick spray. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes until cooked through and temp reaches 165 degrees F with a meat thermometer.
- Right before serving, make the quick hot honey: add honey and hot sauce to a small bowl, microwave for 10-15 seconds. Taste and add more hot sauce to adjust to your liking. Drizzle honey over the chicken before serving or use it as a dip for the chicken.

– courtesy of [AmbitiousKitchen.com](#) **4**



Shrimp & Nectarine Salad

Prep/Total Time: 30 min.; **Yield:** 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1-1/2 teaspoons honey
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh tarragon

SALAD:

- 4 teaspoons canola oil, divided
- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn
- 1 pound uncooked shrimp (26-30 per pound), peeled and de-veined
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 8 cups torn mixed salad greens
- 2 medium nectarines, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup finely chopped red onion

Directions

- In a small bowl, whisk orange juice, vinegar, mustard and honey until blended. Stir in tarragon.
- In a large skillet, heat 1 teaspoon oil over medium-high heat. Add corn; cook and stir 1-2 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove from pan.
- Sprinkle shrimp with lemon pepper and salt. In the same skillet, heat remaining oil over medium-high heat. Add shrimp; cook and stir 3-4 minutes or until shrimp turn pink. Stir in corn.
- In a large bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Drizzle with 1/3 cup dressing and toss to coat. Divide mixture among four plates. Top with shrimp mixture; drizzle with remaining dressing. Serve immediately.

– courtesy of [TasteofHome.com](#)