



## Stay Upbeat About Heart Health

February makes us think of the color red – red hearts for Valentine’s Day and National Wear Red Day for the American Heart Association.

We should also think about red fruits and veggies for their heart healthy nutrition. They are full of essential nutrients that will keep your heart healthy, as well as the rest of your body. Of the My Plate food groups, fruits and vegetables are the best sources of fiber. Fiber helps keep your heart healthy and lowers your risk for heart attack and stroke. Fiber helps lower these risks by moving some fats and cholesterol out of your body. Eating a high fiber diet means that not all of the fat and cholesterol you eat ends up in your bloodstream. This is good news for your heart.

Fruits and veggies are also low in calories, which is good as we head into National Nutrition Month in March. Any way that you can add them to your diet is beneficial to you in the long run. It will also help you maintain a

weight, which is key for your heart. Maintaining a healthy body weight helps keep your heart healthy because it works less to pump blood throughout the body. Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and sodium and are cholesterol free. Some fruits and veggies, like bananas and tomatoes are also good sources of potassium which helps maintain healthy blood pressure, also great for your heart.

Where do we get the connection between the color red and heart health? The red coloring in fruits like grapefruit and watermelon and in veggies like tomatoes and red peppers comes from the beta-carotene in vitamin A. Vitamin A helps keep your immune system strong and helps with a healthy heart and circulatory system.

Treating your heart well is worth the rewards. A strong heart reduces your risk for heart disease, plus gives you more energy and vitality. Commit to caring for your heart with exercise and a heart-friendly diet. Do your best to cut

saturated and trans fat and excess amounts of sodium and cholesterol out of your diet. Make fruits and vegetables a staple at every meal. Get your heart pumping with aerobic activities such as swimming, brisk walking or jogging. If you smoke, it is best to quit because smokers have a higher risk of heart disease than nonsmokers. During those winter months, take care to not overexert yourself while shoveling snow or performing other outdoor chores. These activities have been linked to heart attacks as well as injuries to the back, wrists, and hips.



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#### Ingredients

- 1 lb. lean ground turkey
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. chili powder
- 1 Tbsp. ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp. ground coriander
- 15.5 oz. can no-salt added kidney beans, drained
- 3/4 cup low sodium salsa
- 14.5 oz. canned, no-salt added, diced tomatoes, undrained

#### Directions

Spray large saucepan with cooking spray. Cook beef and onion over medium-high heat for 5-7 minutes, stirring constantly to break up beef. Transfer to colander and rinse with water to drain excess fat. Return beef to pan. Stir in bell pepper, garlic, chili powder, cumin, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce to simmer, cover and cook for 20 minutes. Serve with low-fat grated cheese.

#### Tailgate Chili Serves 4

Source - American Heart Association <http://www.recipes.heart.org/>