Whether it is your mother, your brother or even your son, everyone knows at least one person who has heart disease or who has suffered from a stroke. February is American Heart Month and my challenge for you is to take a step to do something healthy for your heart. It could be to start exercising, eating more healthy fats or decreasing your salt intake. Are you ready to take the challenge?

Many factors contribute to a healthy heart. Make sure you check out all the different aspects listed above.
**Cholesterol!**

Did you know your body needs cholesterol to survive? Cholesterol comes from two ways: made by our bodies and consumed in our diet. There are different types of cholesterol: good and bad. What is important to know is the differences between these types of cholesterol and what you can do to increase the good cholesterol and decrease the bad cholesterol. Too much of bad and not enough of good can increase your chances for heart disease. See the chart below to see where your numbers should be!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Cholesterol</td>
<td>&lt;200 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDL (Bad) Cholesterol</td>
<td>&lt;100 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDL (Good) Cholesterol</td>
<td>60 mg/dL or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triglycerides</td>
<td>&lt;150 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to keep your cholesterol in check?

- Exercise (see p. 6)
- Limit Saturated Fat and Trans Fat
- Increase consumption of mono-unsaturated, poly-unsaturated and omega-3 fatty acids (see below for sources)
- Increase fruit and vegetable intake

**What is heart disease?**

Heart disease is a simple term that is used to describe several different problems related to plaque buildup in the walls of the arteries, also called atherosclerosis. Arteries transport blood away from the heart to surrounding organs and tissues. See the image below. In the first artery, there is no plaque build-up, but as heart disease progresses (artery 2 and 3), the arteries becomes more narrow, making it harder for blood to move through, which can create an increased risk for a heart attack or stroke (artery 4).

High Density Lipoprotein (HDL cholesterol) keeps bad cholesterol or Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) from sticking and blocking up your artery walls. High levels of HDL and low levels of LDL may also protect you from heart attack and stroke. Consuming mono-unsaturated (MUFA’s) and poly-unsaturated (PUFA’s) fatty acids is key.

**MUFA’s:** nuts and canola, olive, sunflower oil

**PUFA’s:** Omega-6 Fatty Acids—soybean, corn, safflower oil; Omega-3 Fatty Acids—salmon, trout, herring, soybean, canola oil and walnuts, flaxseed
### AGENCY SPOTLIGHT!

**FOOD GATHERERS COMMUNITY KITCHEN**

Located at 312 W. Huron in downtown Ann Arbor, the Food Gatherers Community Kitchen at the Delonis Center serves 2 meals per day Monday thru Friday and one meal on Saturday and Sunday. With our extensive network of volunteers, the community kitchen can see 20-25 volunteers per day! In addition, there can be up to 100 meals served at lunch and up to 150 meals served at dinner time. If you work with any clients that are in need of a free meal, refer them to the Community Kitchen, where there are no questions asked!

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### High Blood Pressure

Testing to see if you have high blood pressure is important because it is often called the ‘silent killer’, you may not know you have it until it is too late. Blood pressure should be checked at a health care provider or at a pharmacy with a blood pressure cuff. There are two measurements for blood pressure:

- **Systolic**—top number: maximum pressure in arteries during a heartbeat
- **Diastolic**—bottom number: lowest pressure in arteries between heartbeats, while heart is refilling with blood

This reads as 117 over 76 millimeters of mercury

### Risk Factors for High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)

- Age—risk increases with age
- Race—Risk increases in African Americans
- Family history
- Obesity or overweight
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Tobacco/excessive alcohol use
- Too much salt (sodium) in diet
- Too little potassium in diet
- Stress
- Chronic conditions—high cholesterol, diabetes, kidney disease can increase risk for developing hypertension

### Blood Pressure Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood Pressure Category</th>
<th>Systolic mm Hg (upper #)</th>
<th>Diastolic mm Hg (lower #)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>less than 120</td>
<td>and less than 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prehypertension</td>
<td>120 – 139</td>
<td>or 80 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Blood Pressure</td>
<td>140 – 159</td>
<td>or 90 – 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertensive Crisis</td>
<td>160 or higher</td>
<td>or 100 or higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hypertensive Crisis (Emergency care needed)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Emergency care needed)</td>
<td>Higher than 180</td>
<td>or Higher than 110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: American Heart Association*
D.A.S.H. Diet

The D.A.S.H. diet stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension and can be used to treat or prevent high blood pressure. This diet promotes eating a variety of foods rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber while reducing sodium (salt) intake. Sodium can effect blood pressure in at-risk people or those with hypertension. There are a couple different variations of the D.A.S.H. Diet.

Standard DASH Diet—consuming up to 2,300 mg sodium per day

Lower sodium DASH Diet—consuming up to 1,500 mg of sodium per day

Both versions aim to reduce the amount of sodium in your diet compared to a more traditional diet. The lower sodium version is helpful in lowering blood pressure for adults who are middle-aged or older, for African-Americans and for those who already have high blood pressure.

*Always check with your doctor for what is best for you.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Group</th>
<th>Daily Servings</th>
<th>Serving Sizes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains*</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>1 slice bread, 1 oz dry cereal, 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>1 cup raw leafy vegetable, 1/2 cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetables, 1/2 cup vegetable juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>1 medium fruit, 1/4 cup dried fruit, 1/2 cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit, 1/2 cup fruit juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1 cup milk or yogurt, 1 1/2 oz cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean meats, poultry and fish</td>
<td>6 or less</td>
<td>1 oz cooked meats, poultry or fish, 1 egg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts, seeds and legumes</td>
<td>4-5 per week</td>
<td>1/3 cup or 1 1/2 oz nuts, 2 Tbsp peanut butter, 2 Tbsp or 1/2 oz seeds, 1/2 cup cooked legumes (dry beans or peas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats and oils</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1 tsp soft margarine, 1 tsp vegetable oil, 1 Tbsp mayonnaise, 2 Tbs salad dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets and added sugars</td>
<td>5 or less per week</td>
<td>1 Tbsp sugar, 1 Tbsp jelly/jam, 1/2 cup sorbet, gelatin, 1 cup lemonade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The DASH eating plan shown above is based on 2,000 calories a day.

*Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute*
Heart Healthy Recipes

Sautéed Green Beans & Cherry Tomatoes
(American Heart Association)
Serves: 4
Serving Size: 1 cup
Ingredients:
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 pound green beans, trimmed
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 cups halved cherry tomatoes
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- Salt and pepper, to taste
Instructions:
Heat 1 teaspoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add green beans and cook, stirring often, until seared in spots, 2-3 minutes. Add water, cover, reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, about 3 minutes for tender-crisp or 6 minutes for tender. Push the beans to the side; add the remaining 1 teaspoon oil and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, stir everything together and cook until the tomatoes begin to break down, 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in vinegar, salt and pepper.

Per Serving: 71 calories, 3 grams fat, 2 g MUFA, 157 mg sodium, 11 grams carbohydrates, 5 grams fiber, 3 grams protein

Sweet & Savory Grilled Chicken
(American Heart Association)
Serves: 4
Ingredients:
- 2 teaspoons light brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1-1 1/4 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast
Instructions:
Combine brown sugar, dry mustard, onion powder, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Coat both sides of the chicken with the rub up to 30 minutes before grilling or broiling. Pre-heat the grill to medium-high or position a rack in upper third of the oven and preheat the broiler. Grill the chicken, turning once, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers 165°F, 4-8 minutes per side. To broil: line a broiler pan (or baking sheet) with foil and coat it with cooking spray. Place the chicken on the foil. Broil, watching carefully and turning at least once, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers 165°F, 10-15 minutes total.

Per Serving: 140 calories, 3 grams fat, 196 mg sodium, 3 grams carbohydrates, 23 grams protein
Exercise!

Everyone has been touched in some way by cardiovascular disease. We all have a family member or friend who has suffered a heart attack or stroke; maybe you’ve even suffered one yourself. Indeed, it is remarkable the “reach” this disease has. What is equally as remarkable is how easily exercise can prevent death or disability from a heart attack or a stroke.

One of the most compelling statistics in exercise science research suggests that low aerobic fitness is a better predictor of early mortality than cigarette smoking. That’s right; not possessing some minimal level of aerobic fitness is a greater risk factor for premature death than lighting up a cigarette.

To take this a step further, the greatest health-related benefits from exercise are derived when you go from horribly out of shape to just out of shape. If you think of fitness as being on a continuum, one is a complete couch potato and ten is an elite marathoner, going from a two to a three on that continuum, or a two to a four, results in greater improvements in health then going from a six to a nine. You don’t have to get in great shape from exercise to be healthier, you just have to go from very very unfit to just unfit.

These are two interesting concepts that I think should frame exercise in a different context for everyone. First, it is clear exercise’s role in disease prevention is quite potent given the fact that the pathology associated with low aerobic fitness is greater than all the carcinogens in cigarettes. Secondly, I’m not saying you have to become the fittest person on the planet to be healthier. I’m just saying don’t be horribly out of shape.

To accomplish this, a little goes a long way. Research suggests that as little as 60 minutes of cumulative or consecutive physical activity each day is enough to confer significant health benefits. Notice I said physical activity, not even exercise. Exercise is a form of physical activity; however physical activity is much broader. Cleaning the house, walking the dog, playing with your kids and just about any other sustained bodily movement falls into the category of physical activity. Now I know what you’re thinking, “that’s it, that’s not that much?” Ah, maybe it isn’t, but statistics suggest approximately two-thirds of all Americans don’t perform that much physical activity on most days of the week. Pretty sad and scary, but true and certainly explains why most of us have been touched by cardiovascular disease.

The uplifting news is it doesn’t take much to change this. I’m not asking you to get a gym membership, exercise two hours per day, five days per week. I’m asking you to commit to moving an hour per day. That’s right, just an hour. It doesn’t even have to be all at once, it could be 15 minutes in four blocks during the day, or even six blocks of ten minutes. When you put it like that it really isn’t much time at all and considering doing so will literally put years onto your life, you can’t afford to not make the time.

By Michael Stack, BS CFP CSCS*D, Exercise Physiologist and Owner of Applied Fitness Solutions (www.appliedfitsolutions.com), to contact Michael you can email him at stack@appliedfitsolutions.com or call 734-994-8570.

What’s New at Food Gatherers?

Food Gatherers has two new interns working in our Volunteer Department: Ben Putt and Kathy Gee

Ben is studying Social Work at Eastern Michigan University, with plans to graduate in August 2013. He is happy to be interning with an organization like Food Gatherers because he wants to expand his knowledge of non-profit organizations in the area, as well as the ins and outs of Food Gatherers, including Development, Agency Relations, and Operations.

Kathy has her Associate Degree from Schoolcraft College in Liberal Arts and is currently attending Eastern Michigan University, looking to graduate in August 2013 with a Bachelor degree in social work. Kathy hopes to have a career working with underserved population. Kathy is also a member of the American Criminal Justice and public speaker for her Chinese culture.