

Heart-Healthy Recipe

By Fiona Haynes, About.com

Meringue Nests with Strawberries

These individual meringue desserts make a delicious and almost fat-free dessert for Valentine's Day, or during spring and summer. You don't have to stick with strawberries, of course. Top these meringue nests with the berries or fruit of your choice.

Prep time: 15 minutes; cook time: 4 hours

Ingredients:

4 large egg whites, with absolutely no yolk
1/4 tsp cream of tartar
3/4 cup ultra-fine baker's sugar (regular is fine)
2 cups fat-free whipped topping
1 cup sliced strawberries

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. In a large, clean and cool bowl, beat egg whites with an electric mixer at medium speed until foamy. Add cream of tartar. Continue to mix until the soft-peak stage. Add sugar one tablespoon at a time and continue mixing, at high speed, until stiff peaks form.

Drop spoonfuls of meringue on to a parchment-lined baking sheet, making six piles. Using the back of a spoon, shape the meringues into nests. Bake for one hour. Turn off oven and cool meringues in the oven for two-three hours, until dry. Cool completely.

Carefully remove meringues from parchment and spoon whipped topping into each of the nests. Divide sliced strawberries among meringue nests. For an extra treat, drizzle a little fat-free chocolate syrup over the top. Serve immediately. Don't refrigerate the meringue, as it will become somewhat chewy. Any unused meringue nests can be stored in an airtight container for a day or two.

Serves 6. Per serving: Calories 151, calories from fat 1, total fat 1g (sat 0.1g), cholesterol 0mg, sodium 37mg, carbohydrate 37mg, fiber 0.6mg, protein 2.5g

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Shrimp and Angel Hair Pasta

Succulent lemon-marinated shrimp tossed with peas, roasted peppers and angel hair pasta make for a quick supper on a busy night. Enjoy with a green salad drizzled with your favorite low-fat or fat-free dressing.

Prep time: 10 minutes; cook time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

Juice of one lemon, divided
Lemon zest
1 tsp dried oregano
20 medium shrimp, tails on
1/2 jar roasted red peppers
8-ounces angel hair pasta
1 cup peas
Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

Combine lemon zest and half the lemon juice in a dish. Add shrimp and marinate for 10 minutes. Chop red peppers and put to one side.

Place a large pot of water on to boil for the pasta. Place angel hair pasta in pot, followed by peas. Cook pasta according to package instructions.

Preheat broiler, and spray broiler pan or baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Arrange marinated shrimp on broiler pan, and broil three minutes first side and two minutes the other. Do not overcook. Remove from heat.

Quickly drain pasta and peas, and empty into a large serving bowl. Add shrimp and chopped peppers; pour remaining lemon juice over the shrimp and pasta, and toss. Use black pepper if desired. Serve immediately.

Serves 4. Per serving: Calories 274, calories from fat 16, total fat 1.7g (sat 0.1g), cholesterol 45mg, sodium 148mg, carbohydrate 49.4g, fiber 4g, protein 15.1g



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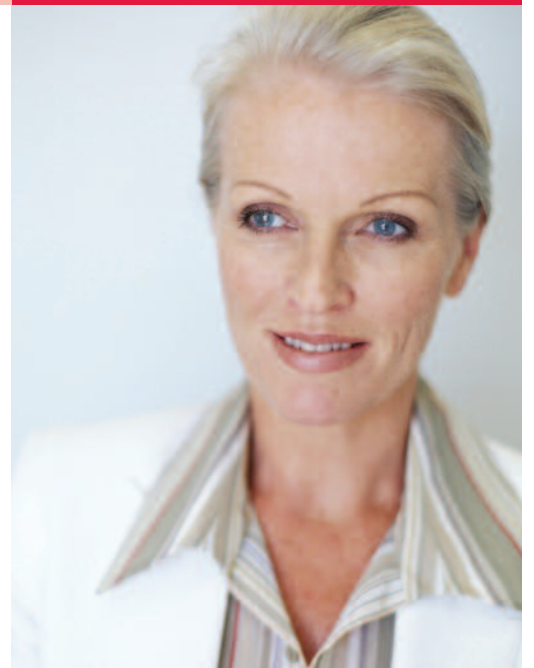
Healthy Habits to Improve Your Life

Disregard them, and you may well be taking a big gamble with your mental and emotional well-being.

By Dulce Zamora, WebMD Feature.
Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD

There are 13 ways to boost your chances of living a happy, healthy life. More can be added to this list, but, for simplicity's sake, we'll stick with this typically unlucky number.

Instead of bringing misfortune, however, the 13 habits promise a life of vigor and vivacity. There are, of course, no guarantees, but many of the practices mentioned here have been published in scientific journals. Disregard them, and you may well be taking a big gamble with your mental and emotional well-being.





Healthy Habit No. 1: eat breakfast every morning

Breakfast eaters are champions of good health. Research shows people who have a morning meal tend to take in more vitamins and minerals, and less fat and cholesterol. The result is often a leaner body, lower cholesterol count, and less chance of overeating.

"That one act [of eating breakfast] seems to make a difference in people's overall weight," says Melinda Johnson, RD, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association (ADA). She says breakfast can hold off hunger pangs until lunchtime and make high-calorie vending machine options less enticing.



Not only that, researchers at the 2003 American Heart Association conference reported that breakfast eaters are significantly less likely to be obese and get diabetes compared with nonbreakfast eaters.

Another study in the *International Journal of Food Science and Nutrition* showed that people who consumed breakfast cereal every day reported feeling better both physically and mentally than those who rarely ate cereal in the morning.

For kids, breakfast appears to enhance alertness, attention, and performance on standardized achievement tests, reports the ADA. To get the full benefits of breakfast, the Mayo Clinic recommends a meal with carbohydrates, protein, and a small amount of fat. They say that because no single food gives you all of the nutrients you need, eating a variety of foods is essential to good health.

Yet, even with so much scientific support that breakfast does the body good, many people still make

excuses not to eat in the morning. They include not having enough time and not feeling hungry. For these people, Johnson suggests tailoring breakfast to the day.

"When I'm getting ready in the morning, I don't really want to take the time to eat breakfast because that would mean sacrificing sleep," says Johnson. "So I bring my breakfast with me, and I know I have an hour when I'm reading emails in the office when I can eat it. By that time, I'm hungry because I've been up for almost a couple of hours."

There is, perhaps, no better word in the English language to better illustrate how you can incorporate healthy habits into your everyday life.

"A little planning goes a long way," says Johnson. "Eating healthy never happens by accident."

For the most part, neither do good fitness, skin protection, healthy teeth, weight loss and social ties. Many of these habits take effort that need to be scheduled into busy lives.

To eat healthy, for example, it would help to set aside time to draft a menu, make a grocery list, go to

the store, prepare meals and pack breakfast and lunch.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/13-healthy-habits-to-improve-your-life>

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By Fiona Haynes, About.com

Low-fat Tomato Spinach Soup

Enjoy this soup with some crusty whole-grain rolls.
Prep time: 10 minutes; cook time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/2 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups fat-free, low-sodium vegetable broth (such as Kitchen Basics)
- 3 ounces fresh spinach, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

Heat oil in Dutch oven or soup pot. Gently sauté garlic, onion and celery until softened. Sprinkle thyme and oregano, and stir. Add canned crushed and diced tomatoes, and vegetable broth, followed by chopped spinach and basil and stir until wilted. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Stir in balsamic vinegar and season with black pepper.

Serve 4-6. Per 1 cup serving: Calories 115, calories from fat 20, total fat 2.2g (sat 0.3g), cholesterol 0mg, sodium 309mg, carbohydrate 19.3g, fiber 5.2g, protein 4.5g

12 twelve

Healthy Habit No. 12: **take a daily walk**



And there are plenty of opportunities to move those legs:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Walk to the store
- Window shop at the mall
- Leave your desk and visit your co-worker instead of sending him an email
- Walk and talk with friends instead of meeting for a meal

We already mentioned the merits of exercise in habit No. 5. Now, here's a tip on how to incorporate physical activity into your daily life: **WALK.**

We're not talking about taking the time out of your busy schedule to work out—that's important, too—but infusing life- and limb-saving movement into your waking hours.

"Just move. Pace during phone calls, while you're brushing your

teeth, while watching your son's soccer game," says Bryant, noting that every 20 steps a person takes is one calorie burned.

An eight-year study of 13,000 people also showed that people who walked 30 minutes daily had a significantly reduced chance of premature death compared with those who rarely exercised, reports the American Council on Exercise.



two

Healthy Habit No. 2: add fish and omega-3 fatty acids to your diet

The AHA recommends a serving of fish two times per week. Besides being a good source of protein and a food relatively low in the bad type of dietary fat called saturated fat, fish has omega-3 fatty acids—which have been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease.

Fatty fish such as mackerel, lake trout, herring, sardines, albacore

tuna and salmon, are rich in two kinds of omega-3 fatty acids: eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). Foods such as tofu, soybeans, canola, walnuts, flaxseed, and their oils contain alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), which convert to omega-3 in the body. Even though the benefits of ALA are controversial, the AHA still recommends foods containing it as part of a healthy diet.

In addition to their heart-health benefits, there is some evidence that omega-3 fatty acids may also soothe an overactive immune system, says Johnson. Even though this benefit is still being studied, she says there appears to be a link between getting more omega-3s in your diet and reducing allergies, asthma, eczema and autoimmune disorders.

three

Healthy Habit No. 3: get enough sleep

"Your body has to have enough time to rest," says Michael Fleming, MD, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). Otherwise, he says you may find yourself feeling cranky and tired.

This may sound like common sense, but according to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), more than two-thirds of older adults suffer from sleep problems and many American adults don't get the minimum amount of shuteye needed to stay alert.

Sleep is vital to good health and to mental and emotional well-being. The NSF reports that people who

don't get enough slumber are more likely than others to develop psychiatric problems and to use health care services. Plus, sleep deprivation can negatively affect memory, learning, and logical reasoning.

Not enough ZZZs can also be hazardous. More than one-half of adult drivers—some 100 million people—say they have driven drowsy in the past year, according to NSF polls. About one out of five of these drivers—32 million people—say they've fallen asleep while driving.

Each year drowsy driving causes more than 100,000 car crashes, 1,500 deaths, and tens of thousands of injuries, reports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The NSF recommends taking a 15- to 20-minute nap. Because it takes about 30 minutes for the caffeine to work, taking a nap while you wait for the caffeine to kick in can help restore alertness.

To avoid the pitfalls of insufficient sleep, make sure to get at least seven to 10 hours of slumber each night. Kids need more sleep, depending on their age.

4 four

Healthy Habit No. 4: make social connections

Volunteer. Go to church. Join a club. Whatever you do, do it with people. Communal activities are good for your physical and mental health, according to a study published in the March/April 2004 issue of the *American Journal of Health Behavior*.

It makes sense, says C. David Jenkins, PhD, author of *Building Better Health: A Handbook of Behavioral Change*. He says social ties have many benefits, including:

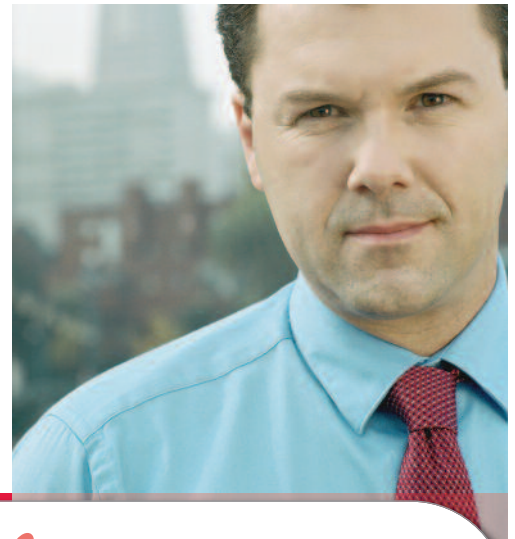
Providing information. You may think, for instance, your frequent nosebleeds, coughing and sneezing episodes are trivial, but when a close friend or relative hears of it, he or she may encourage you to go to

a doctor. If the symptoms turn out to be a serious condition, the social tie could have saved your life.

Instrumental help. Friends and family can provide physical support in time of need. They may help with cooking, cleaning, running errands, doing grocery shopping and driving to the doctor's office.

Emotional support. Sharing a problem with a trusted person can help alleviate an internal burden. "It's a load off your chest," says Jenkins. Offering a sense of belonging. This feeling not only helps reinforce a person's identity, it also assists in preventing and overcoming depression and anxiety.

Community ties also help improve mental functioning, says Fleming. Group activities can help keep the mind active and maintain desirable levels of serotonin—the brain chemical associated with mood. "Lack of social interaction will [decrease] serotonin levels," says Fleming.



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Fat-Free Valentine Meringue Cookies

If you're looking for a low-calorie, fat-free treat this Valentine's Day, then try these light meringue cookies. For best results, separate the eggs while cold, make sure not a speck of yolk contaminates them, and leave the whites for 20 minutes or so before beating them. Make sure the whisks and bowl are entirely clean and free from grease before use.

Ingredients:

3 egg whites
1/4 tsp cream of tartar
3/4 cup superfine sugar
Red food coloring
Red sprinkles

Preheat oven to 225 degrees. Line a large, rimmed baking tray with parchment paper. Beat egg whites with an electric mixer on medium speed until foamy. Add cream of tartar and continue beating egg whites until the soft peak stage. Gradually add sugar, a tablespoon or two at a time, beating well after each addition. Mix until all the sugar has been added and the egg whites are stiff and glossy. Add a few drops of red food coloring and stir to make the egg whites pink.

Drop by the tablespoon onto the parchment-lined baking sheet, or, with the help of a small heart-shaped cookie cutter, make heart shape meringues—spoon the meringue inside the cookie cutter, and push down with the spoon as you lift the cookie cutter, then repeat for each cookie.

Bake one hour. Switch off oven, and leave in the oven for two-three hours.

Makes about 24-30 cookies. Per cookie: Calories 26, calories from fat 0, total fat 0g, cholesterol 0mg, sodium 8mg, carbohydrate 6.2g, fiber 0g, protein 0.4g

"Decaffeinated tea is better," says Fleming, noting that the caffeinated variety can be dehydrating, and sugary drinks can lead to weight gain.

There is some evidence that tea may help in improving memory, and preventing cavities, cancer and heart disease. Fleming says, though, that the overall research is still inconclusive.

"There may well be some beneficial effects of tea, particularly the potential antioxidant effect, but we don't have great data on that right now that is that specific."

However, there's no doubt that a cool iced tea can be a refreshing treat during hot days. Try flavoring your tea with juices, fruits, cinnamon sticks, ginger and other condiments.



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Sautéed Chicken with Mushroom Sauce

Flattening the chicken breasts makes for fast and evenly cooked meat, which is succulent and tender. The creamy, yet low-fat sauce takes a matter of minutes to prepare while the chicken is kept warm in the oven. You could replace half the chicken broth with red or white wine if you like.

Ingredients:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp canola oil
- 8 ounces cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup reduced fat sour cream

Preparation:

Flatten chicken breasts by placing between two sheets of plastic wrap and pounding them with a rolling pin or meat mallet.

Mix flour and seasoning in a shallow dish; dredge chicken breasts in flour, shaking off excess flour.

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over a medium-high heat. Sauté chicken for about 5-6 minutes each side until golden on the outside and no longer pink in the middle. Remove from skillet, cover and keep warm.

Add mushrooms and onion to skillet and sauté gently until softened. Add broth, followed by cornstarch mixed in a 1/4 cup of water. Cook until bubbly and thickened, about three minutes. Stir in mustard and sour cream, and cook until heated through, about two minutes more. Spoon sauce over chicken breasts and serve with steamed vegetables and either couscous or whole-grain rice.

Serves 4. Per serving: Calories 243, calories from fat 55, total fat 6.2g (sat 1.8g), cholesterol 88mg, sodium 420mg, carbohydrate 11.4g, protein 35.6g

9
nine

Healthy Habit No. 9: snack the healthy way



The ADA recommends five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day as part of a healthy diet. These plant foods can do many things to boost good health, including:

- Reduce the risk of some cancers
- Beat the signs of aging
- Improve memory
- Promote heart health
- Enhance the immune system

One way to incorporate fruits and veggies into your diet is to have them as snacks. "If you can do one thing [to improve your health], concentrate on getting fruits and veggies," says Johnson. "They are low in calories and high in nutrients."

She says baby carrots and cut-up produce make tasty, convenient munchies. Other healthful snacks

include low-fat yogurt and nuts (in moderation).

The best time to snack is when you are hungry between meals, says Johnson. But beware: Cravings could easily be mistaken for hunger cues, especially for people who are dieting.

10
ten

Healthy Habit No. 10: drink water and eat dairy

Water and milk are essential fluids for good health, but they can also help with shedding pounds. The body needs water to keep properly hydrated and individuals vary widely in how much water they need. Joints need it to stay in motion, and vital organs such as the heart, brain, kidney and liver need it to work properly.

If you don't get enough water, the body goes into emergency mode, and clings to every single water molecule it can find, reports the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center. The stored molecules appear as extra weight. The weight is only released once the body gets enough water.

The calcium in dairy, on the other hand, is known to be important for strong bones and teeth. Studies have also shown it can help prevent high blood pressure, kidney stones, heart disease and colon cancer.

In the weight loss arena, three 8-ounce glasses of low-fat or fat-free milk appear to encourage body fat loss while maintaining muscle mass, according to the ADA. The dairy consumption must be part of a balanced, reduced-calorie meal plan.

five

Healthy Habit No. 5: exercise for better health



We already know that physical activity has a bounty of benefits, which makes it so puzzling why so many people just don't do it. According to the CDC, more than 60% of Americans do not get regular exercise.

Besides its long-term effects, moving your body has immediate benefits, says Cedric Bryant, chief exercise physiologist for the American Council on Exercise. The short-term results of exercise include helping people to think and move better, manage stress, improve mood and get an energy boost.

The excuses that people often give to not exercise are the precise reasons to exercise, says Bryant. People who say they are too tired or don't

have time to workout don't realize that exercise gives people more energy and allows them to be more productive with the rest of their time.

Studies have also shown a link between exercise and a reduced risk of certain cancers.

In case you needed an incentive, here is a review of the advantages of exercise, per the National Cancer Institute:

- Helps control weight
- Maintains healthy bones, muscles and joints
- Reduces risk of developing high blood pressure and diabetes
- Promotes psychological well-being
- Reduces risk of death from heart disease
- Reduces risk of premature death

6
SIX

Healthy Habit No. 6: practice good dental hygiene

Flossing your teeth every day could add 6.4 years to your life, according to Michael Roizen, MD, author of *RealAge*. In his book, Roizen lists flossing as one of the most important daily activities—along with exercise and quitting smoking—that could extend life span.

Roizen's calculation may raise some eyebrows, but the idea that oral health is connected to overall health isn't far-fetched.

The mouth, after all, is an integral part of the body. "Teeth have a blood supply, and that blood supply comes from the heart," says Richard Price, DMD, consumer advisor for the American Dental Association (ADA).

Researchers suspect that the bacteria that produce dental plaque enter the bloodstream. They say these bacteria are somehow associated with the inflammation that occurs with plaque that blocks blood vessels and causes heart disease.

Other researchers have found links between oral bacteria and stroke, diabetes, and the birth of preterm babies and those that have low birth weight.

In addition to preventing disease, flossing and brushing can help keep your pearly whites intact for more than just cosmetic reasons. Teeth help you chew food, speak properly and smile—which, according to Price, can help you keep your dignity.



7 seven

Look up the word "hobby" in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, and you will find the definition as "a pursuit outside one's regular occupation engaged in especially for relaxation."

Since they are relaxing activities, hobbies are usually enjoyable. Some people find joy in craftwork, bird watching, sports, going to flea markets, walking in the park or playing cards.

The joy may help people live healthier and recover better from illness. For one thing, taking part in hobbies can burn calories, more so than just sitting in front of the TV.

In a study of people who had undergone surgery, Jenkins found that people who were involved in hobbies before their operation had better recovery six months later, compared with people who did not have hobbies.

The participants with hobbies tended to have more drive and interest in things and other people, says Jenkins. "It was a more active orientation to life."

Healthy Habit No. 7: take up a hobby



8 eight

Healthy Habit No. 8: protect your skin

Our skin starts to age as soon as we are born and, according to the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), the best way to protect it and look younger is to stay out of the sun.

The sun has harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays that can cause wrinkles, dryness and age spots. Overexposure can cause sunburn, skin texture changes, dilated blood vessels and skin cancers.

Avoiding the sun, however, is not always ideal or practical. To reduce the risk of skin damage, the AAD offers the following tips:

- Always wear sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher
- Don a hat with a brim and wear other protective clothing
- Don't deliberately sunbathe
- Try to avoid sun exposure between 10 am and 3 pm