



WELSH CONNECTION

American Heart Month

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February is American Heart Month

Owning a pet — particularly a dog — could help lower your risk of heart disease.

“Over the last decade or so there have been periodic reports on the association between pet ownership and cardiovascular risk,” said Dr. Glenn N. Levine, a cardiologist with the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Administration Medical Center in Houston and lead author of a new scientific statement by the AHA which looked at the influence of pets on heart health.

Owning pets is associated with reducing your risk of heart disease, and there are a variety of reasons that may be at work that influence this relationship. It may be that healthier people are more likely to be pet owners or that people with dogs tend to exercise more. Pets also play a role in providing social support to their owners, which is an important factor in helping you stick with a new habit or adopting a new healthy behavior.

Pets and Physical Activity

Most of the studies focused on dogs and heart disease. “Not surprisingly, dog owners who walk their dogs are more likely to achieve the recommended level of physical activity than dog owners who do not walk their dogs,” according to the study. “Unfortunately, a significant proportion of dog owners do not regularly walk their dogs.”

In one study, more than 5,200 Japanese adult dog owners engaged in significantly more walking and physical activity than non-dog owners, and were 54 percent more likely to get the recommended level of physical activity.

“A prospective cohort study of people who adopted either a dog or a cat from an animal shelter found a marked and sustained increase in the number and duration of recreational walks among those who adopted a dog, but no or little change among those who adopted a cat or no pet,” the study says.

It’s unclear whether the results are because dogs are the pets most commonly owned and studied, if dogs are the pet most likely to increase their owner’s physical activity or because of additional beneficial effects of dog ownership.

According to statistics provided by the Humane Society of the United States, Americans own about 78.2 million dogs and 86.4 million cats.

Pets and Healthy Numbers

Only a modest amount of data was available to show the relationship between pet ownership and modestly lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and that people with pets and cardiovascular disease were more likely to survive heart attacks. Levine, an American Heart Association volunteer, emphasized that people should not adopt a pet solely to reduce their risk of heart disease.

The primary purpose of pet adoption or rescue should be to provide the pet a loving home and to derive enjoyment from the pet,” he wrote. Whether or not you have a pet, physical activity can help you lead a healthier life.

- ◆ *Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. More than half of the deaths due to heart disease in 2009 were in men.*
- ◆ *About 47% of sudden cardiac deaths occur outside a hospital. This suggests that many people with heart disease don’t act on early warning signs.*



Fight the No. 1 Killer of Women
HEART DISEASE
During American Heart Month

The facts are clear. More women die of heart disease than all forms of cancer combined. Uncover the truth and make ending heart disease a reality.

Keep scrolling for tips on managing Heart Disease and your health!

One Move Wonder: Lunge & Press



Start in left lunge, with right foot forward and 5- to 8-lb dumbbell in right hand. As you lift to standing, lunge right leg toward left and curl dumbbell to chest. When right foot meets left, press dumbbell overhead. Return to start. Do 3 sets of 6 reps per side.

<http://www.health.com/health/full-body-exercises>

Salted Oat Fudge

INGREDIENTS:

- ¾ cup creamy unsalted almond butter or peanut butter
 - ¾ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
 - ⅓ cup maple syrup or honey
 - 4 tablespoons butter, sliced into small cubes, or ¼ cup melted coconut oil
 - ¾ teaspoon salt (scale back, to taste, if your nut butter is salted)
 - ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
 - 1¾ cups oats ground into flour, see step 1
- Optional: Flaky sea salt, for sprinkling on top

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prep work: Preheat oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Cut two strips of parchment paper to fit across the interior of an 8 to 9-inch square baker. Criss-cross the papers at the bottom of the baker and fold the ends up the sides of the baker (see photos). If you need to make your own oat flour, blend 1 and ¾ cups oats in a blender or food processor until ground into a fine flour.
2. Toast the nuts: Arrange the nuts in a single layer on a small, rimmed baking sheet (I used parchment paper for easy clean-up). Bake for 7 to 10 minutes, until fragrant (7 minutes for thinner/smaller/ chopped nuts and about 10 for whole pecans). If you're using large nuts like pecans, transfer them to a cutting board and chop them into small pieces with a chef's knife.
3. Make the fudge: In a medium-sized, heavy-bottomed pot, combine the nut butter, chocolate chips, sweetener, butter, salt and cinnamon. Warm the pot over medium heat, stirring often, until the mixture is melted throughout. Remove the pot from heat.
4. Stir the vanilla extract into the pot, followed by the oat flour and finally, the chopped pecans. The mixture will have thickened up at this point, so you might have to put some muscle into it to mix in those pecans. You can do it!
5. Carefully dump the fudge mixture into your lined square baker. Use the back of a sturdy mixing spoon to push the mixture across the baker so it's roughly evenly distributed. Cover the bottom side of a thick, heavy-bottomed drinking glass or mason jar with parchment paper and press it down on the fudge repeatedly until the fudge is evenly packed. If you're finishing the fudge with flaky sea salt, lightly sprinkle some on top now and gently press it into place with the bottom of your parchment-covered glass.
6. Cover and freeze the fudge for 30 to 45 minutes, until it's firm to the touch and no longer shiny in the middle. If you're not in a hurry, you can refrigerate the fudge for a couple of hours or longer.
7. Use a chef's knife to slice the fudge into 1¼-inch wide columns and rows. Fudge will keep well for a couple of days at room temperature, or for a few weeks in the freezer, sealed in an air-tight freezer bag.



A lightened up Valentine's Day Treat!

Gut Bacteria May Help Curb Your Heart Disease

Turns out it might not be the fat and cholesterol in red meat that most harm your heart. It could be how bacteria in your gut interact with the food.

Cleveland Clinic researchers surprised everyone with that news four years ago. This month they revealed another surprise: It could be possible to treat or prevent diet-induced heart disease by tweaking your gut bacteria. So far, it has worked in lab mice.

The same method may one day treat chronic kidney disease and diabetes. Those diseases are linked to gut microbes too.

“The concept that gut bacteria contribute not only to atherosclerosis, but also to heart failure and chronic kidney disease, opens up exciting new nutritional and interventional prospects,” says Stanley Hazen, MD, PhD, Head of Preventive Cardiology and Rehabilitation at Cleveland Clinic.



Your digestive tract is full of bacteria. Some of them feed on choline and carnitine, nutrients in red meat, egg yolks and high-fat dairy products. As they feed, they give off a chemical called TMA (trimethylamine). Your liver turns TMA into TMAO (trimethylamine-*N*-oxide).

TMAO in your blood affects the inner wall of your blood vessels, causing cholesterol buildup. If you have chronically high TMAO, you have double the risk of heart attack, stroke and death. Studies show that levels of TMAO in your blood can help predict your risk of heart disease.

So, if TMAO is harmful, how do we get rid of it? One way is to stop gut bacteria from making TMA in the first place.

The new study by Dr. Hazen and his team found that a natural substance called DMB (3,3-dimethyl-1-butanol) could do this in mice. The result was lower TMAO levels and fewer clogged arteries.

“We were able to show that drugging the microbiome is an effective way to block diet-induced heart disease,” says Dr. Hazen. “It’s much like how we use statins to stop cholesterol from forming in a body’s cells.”

DMB is found in some olive and grapeseed oils. Because it’s not an antibiotic, DMB doesn’t kill “good bacteria.” And, unlike antibiotics, there’s little risk of overusing it or building resistance to it.

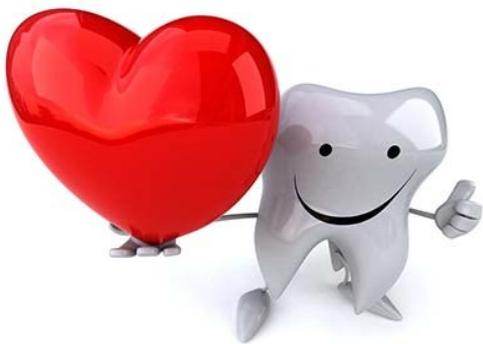
There’s a long way to go before treatments are fully tested and approved for humans.

“My hope is that, down the road, this type of approach to lowering TMAO can be used to augment other approaches for reducing risk of cardiovascular events,” says Dr. Hazen.

In the meantime, should you stop eating meat and other animal products? Dr. Hazen says moderation is key.

“Omnivores usually do have higher levels of TMAO than vegetarians and vegans, but not always,” he says. “TMAO level is determined more by your gut microbes than your diet. Other factors also play a role, such as the microbes you’re exposed to and other aspects of your health, like kidney function and genetics.”

Is There a Relationship Between Periodontitis and Heart Disease?



Do healthy gums mean a healthy heart?

There's no question that regular brushing, flossing and dental checkups can keep your mouth healthy. But if you fall short on your hygiene routine, can gum disease actually cause heart disease?

There's no conclusive evidence that preventing gum disease — periodontitis — can prevent heart disease or that treating gum disease can lessen atherosclerosis, the buildup of artery-clogging plaque that can result in a heart attack or stroke, according to an American Heart Association statement.

“The mouth can be a good warning signpost,” said Ann Bolger, M.D., William Watt Kerr Professor of Clinical Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. “People with periodontitis often have risk factors that not only put their mouth at risk, but their heart and blood vessels, too. But whether one causes the other has not actually been shown.”

Periodontitis and heart disease share risk factors such as smoking, age and diabetes, and both contribute to inflammation in the body. Although these shared risk factors may explain why diseases of the blood vessels and mouth can occur simultaneously, some evidence suggests that there may be an independent association between the two diseases.

The trouble, experts say, is that the research isn't strong enough to suggest that gum disease treatment will lessen the risk of heart attack or stroke.

“We're just not there yet with the research,” said Bolger, who is also an American Heart Association volunteer. “We don't want people who have a heart attack and get a stent to feel that they need aggressive gum disease surgery, which could be risky for them.”



Bolger advises people to lower their risk of heart disease by proven methods, like:

- quitting smoking,
- managing their weight,
- controlling their blood pressure, and
- staying active.

This is not the first time that oral health has been linked to overall health. In the 1920s a crescendo of concern about the connection led to the prevalence of complete tooth extractions, Bolger said. “Unfortunately, we didn't cure heart disease by removing teeth.”

Welsh Mountain is currently accepting new patients! We Accept ALL Insurances!

In the Spotlight

New Employees at WMHC

Amy Randall: HR Assistant

Robert Russo: Dentist at WM and LROH



What's Happening?

Community and Local Events

WIC at Welsh Mountain Health Centers

584 Springville Rd.

New Holland, PA 17557

Every Thursday

9:00 am-5:00 pm

National Wear Red Day

Friday, February 5, 2016



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584 Springville Rd.

435 S. Kinzer Ave., Suite 6

840 Norman Dr.

101 S. 9th St.

New Holland, PA 17557

New Holland, PA 17557

Lebanon, PA 17042

Lebanon, PA 17042

(717) 354-4711

(717) 351-2400

(717) 272-2700

(717) 450-7015

Up Next: March 2016 is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month