February 2019 Volume XVI, Issue 2

February is American Heart Month
10 Tips for a Healthy Heart

Source: BioIQ

Heart disease is the leading killer of Americans, taking the lives of 2,200 people each day. In addition, 103 million adults have high blood pressure and 6.5 million are living with heart failure. While genetic factors do play a part in cardiovascular disease, the good news is 80% of cardiovascular diseases may be preventable with education and action. Simple lifestyle changes can make a big impact when it comes to heart health. Show your heart some love with these 10 tips.

⇒ **Stop Smoking** — Quitting smoking is the best thing that can be done for the heart and for overall health. Smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death in the United States, and smokers have a higher risk of developing many chronic disorders including atherosclerosis, the buildup of fatty substances in the arteries.

⇒ **Know Your Numbers** — Maintaining a healthy weight, blood pressure and total cholesterol play a significant role in maintaining a healthy heart. While there are standard guidelines for blood pressure and cholesterol, ideal weight goals are individual to each person. A physician can help determine an appropriate goal weight based on additional factors such as age and height.

⇒ **Screen for Diabetes** — Untreated diabetes can lead to heart disease, among many other complications. Diabetes can be easily detected through a simple blood test and managed a variety of ways under the care of a physician.

⇒ **Get Active** — Heart pumping physical activity not only helps prevent cardiovascular disease but can also improve overall mental physical health. The American Heart

(Continued on page 4)
6 REASONS A PET IS GOOD FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Source: Canadian Living

Their cute factor isn't the only thing they have going for them.

If you have a pet—especially one of the furry variety—you're probably familiar with the surge of love you feel when she curls up next to you. Or the way petting his head and feeling his soft fur under your fingertips makes a stressful work day fade into the distance. It's not just love. Your pet can have a real physiological impact on your body and can measurably ease distressing symptoms from depression, anxiety, PTSD and more.

Whether you have a diagnosed mental illness, or simply experience loneliness, sadness or stress (don't we all!), here's how your pet helps you cope:

1. She'll increase feel-good hormones.
   Studies have found that interaction with dogs, specifically our own pets, increases levels of feel-good hormones including serotonin, prolactin and oxytocin (which combats the stress hormone cortisol). Petting your own pup for 15 minutes can also decrease blood pressure.

2. He's non-judgmental.
   For many people, a therapist's office becomes a safe space to discuss negative thoughts and fears without interruption or judgment. But what if you can't afford therapy or have trouble finding a therapist that you trust? A pet can provide that support because he'll never interrupt, criticize, give unwanted advice or gossip about your deepest, darkest secrets. He gives unconditional love and that promotes self-acceptance.

3. She's a comforting presence.
   Many of us come home to an empty house or apartment and go to sleep and wake up alone. A pet becomes like a roommate, offering a physical presence—and often physical contact—that alleviates loneliness.

4. He offers distraction.
   One issue with mental illness is many sufferers turn inward and become obsessed with repetitive, negative or suicidal thoughts. Pets can bring their loved ones back into the present moment in the same way that practicing mindfulness encourages an awareness of the surrounding environment. Our pets can provide humor or redirect our attention to a game or activity. Service dogs, in particular, are trained to interrupt rumination, sometimes by nudging their owner.

5. She provides perceived protection.
   For an individual with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a tendency toward hyper vigilance (meaning they're always on high alert for signs of danger), or who experiences bouts of paranoia, a pet can act a bit like a safety blanket that offers protection against potential threats, real or imagined. Even if that protection comes in the form of sounding an alarm when there's an intruder or fire, it may help an anxious person sleep better at night.

6. Active animals promote exercise and social interaction.
   Isolation and inactivity can be side effects of mental health issues, but any animal that needs to be exercised will get its owner outside—maybe even out into nature, which can improve happiness and world connectedness. Dogs, in particular, build social capital because they encourage community

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A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM RODNEY BAILEY, DIRECTOR OF NURSING:

I NEED TO STAY AT HOME IF....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEVER</th>
<th>VOMITING</th>
<th>DIARRHEA</th>
<th>RASH</th>
<th>HEAD LICE</th>
<th>EYE INFECTION</th>
<th>HOSPITAL STAY AND/OR ER VISIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temperature of 100.4 or higher</td>
<td>Within the past 24 hours</td>
<td>Within the past 24 hours</td>
<td>Body rash with itching or fever</td>
<td>Itchy head, active head lice</td>
<td>Redness, itching, and/or &quot;crusty&quot; drainage from eye</td>
<td>Hospital stay and/or ER visit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I AM READY TO GO BACK TO WORK OR SCHOOL WHEN I AM...

| Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication i.e. Tylenol, Motrin | Free from vomiting for at least 2 solid meals | Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours | Free from rash itching, or fever. I have been evaluated by my doctor if needed. | Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home and proof is provided to nurse. | Evaluated by my doctor and have note to return to school. | Released by medical provider to return to work or school. |

Happy Valentine's Day!

Articles or suggestions for this publication may be submitted by the 1st of each month to:

Joyce Lopez-Enevoldsen ● 901 Wallace Blvd., ● Amarillo, Texas 79106
Phone: (806) 351-3308  Fax: (806) 351-3345  Email: joyce.lopez@txpan.org
Association recommends five 30 minute moderate exercise sessions each week.

⇒ **Build Muscle**—Strength training compliments cardiovascular exercise by toning muscles and burning fat. In addition, proper strength training can improve daily functional movements, decreasing the chance of injury. The AHA recommends getting in two days of moderate to high intensity strength training each week.

⇒ **Eat Smart**—A healthy diet full of heart-smart foods is essential to a healthy heart lifestyle. Salmon, nuts, berries and oats are just a few of the heart “superfoods”.

⇒ **Limit Junk**—To reap the full benefit of a heart-healthy diet, it’s important to limit the intake of nutrient-poor junk foods. Added sugars, saturated fat and excessive sodium can all impact heart health, as well as physical health. These foods when eaten in excess can cause weight gain, raise blood pressure and clog arteries, which are all risk factors for heart disease.

⇒ **Stress Less**—Stress increases cortisol, which leads to weight gain, a key risk factor for heart disease. In addition, stress can lead to other unhealthy habits, making it harder to stick to a heart-healthy program. Stress can also decrease overall happiness and increase the risk for anxiety and depression. Many of the items on this list can help with reducing stress, in addition to practicing positive self talk and incorporating mindfulness meditation breaks throughout the day.

⇒ **Sleep More**—Sleeping restores the body, helps decrease stress and increases overall happiness. To reap the full benefits, clocking even seven hours each night is key. A calming bedtime routine and going to bed and waking at the same time each day are all great ways to establish healthy sleep patterns. Getting ample sunshine and physical activity throughout the day also aid in improving sleep quality.

⇒ **Smile**—A happy heart is a healthy heart. Making time for enjoyable activities and hobbies relieve and improve the overall mood, providing a great foundation for a heart healthy lifestyle.

**Employee Recognition**

On January 31, 2018 the Board of Trustees and Executive Management Staff recognized the Cindy Pulse, Administrative Tech in Developmental Health, for 20 years of service with the Center. Also recognized was Margie Scroggins (not present), Hereford Behavioral Health, for 30 years of service. They were awarded a plaque, gift card and a day off.

![Congratulations!](image)
White Hat Award

The IDD Service Coordination department would like to give this month’s White Award to **Yolanda King, Therapist Technician in IDD Services**. Yolanda has a great attitude of generosity and is always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone who asks. Yolanda is very knowledgeable and is always kind when offering her assistance. She is helpful and friendly with the clients and their families when she gives tours of the respite facility and is always happy to answer any questions about respite. Yolanda has gone above and beyond her job duties and from all of us at the IDD Service Coordination Department, we thank you and appreciate all that you do.

Breanna Deakin
For IDD Service Coordination

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Answer’s to last months questions:

1) Laurie Benedetti  2) Protein  3) Fluids

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Answer the questions correctly and your name will be entered in a random drawing to be eligible to win a $25 gift card.

1. Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for your ______________.

2. I’m ready to go back to work or school when I’m fever free for __________.

3 A condition not always associated with the heart is __________.

*Submit your answers to joyce.lopez@txpan.org. Deadline for responses is the 5th of the following month. You must type “Monthly Drawing” in the email subject line to be eligible. For those that do not have a computer, entries may be submitted via interoffice mail. The same requirements apply for hard copy submissions.*
Welcome these New Employees...

Carla Davis     ASCI Pampa
Elizabeth Dumas  Specialized Services
Erin Garza      IDD Respite
Paul Madagiri   HCS Wayne Group Home
Audrey Ricarte  Lindsay Garza
Amina Abdullahi HCS Club Meadows Group Home
Rebecca Bustos  HCS Clearwell Group Home
Fritzi Cates    Child & Adolescent Perryton
Christina Dettmer Adult Behavioral Health Perryton
Cassandra Fraley Specialized Services
Jalynn Garcia   Community Living
Amanda Laughter HCS Camp Lane Group Home

Heart Awareness Month

In observance of Heart Awareness Month, it is a good time to shed some light on a condition that some might not associate with the heart.

Loneliness can pose a significant threat to aging people with heart disease, especially those who live by themselves. In fact, research shows that elderly men and women living alone -- with no one to talk to -- are far more vulnerable to severe cardiovascular perils. According to The Annals of Behavioral Medicine, humans are hard-wired to rely on secure social surroundings. Without human association, they feel vulnerable and become hyper vigilant about their safety. This hypervigilance alters sleep and body functioning, and increases the chance of death. In July 2018, a study presented at the European Society of Cardiology's annual nursing congress reported on nearly 13,500 patients living with heart disease, heart failure, or arrhythmia (abnormal rhythm). Researchers discovered that regardless of a patient's heart condition, age, education, and degree of smoking, loneliness was a factor in the more harmful results. In fact, patients who said they had no one to talk to in times of need had nearly twice the risk of death. Patients with little or no social support were three times as likely to express symptoms of anxiety, depression, and significantly lower quality of life.

This February, if you know someone who lives alone or is lonely, offer them your time and attention. You could literally save their life.
engagement. (How many times have you stopped to say hi to someone because of their cute pup?)

Of course, there are many factors that can affect the benefits of pet ownership including your pet’s personality. For example, an aggressive animal might increase your cortisol levels and lead you to avoid social interaction—not helpful when it comes to mental health! A busy schedule and financial instability could also provide a barrier to positive interaction, meaning that owning a pet may not be the right choice for you. However, if you have the time and money, and can find a pet who suits your personality, he could play a big part in your recovery or in the preservation of

**Did you know…**

There’s 34 days left until Spring

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Laurie Benedetti, Accounting, answered last month’s questions correctly and was randomly selected to win a $25 gift card from Amarillo National Bank.

To claim your card, contact Joyce Lopez-Enevoldsen at 806.351.3308 or email: joyce.lopez@txpan.org.
The Importance of Quality Sleep on Health and Safety
Submitted by: Desire Winslow, Safety Director

It's estimated that nearly one-third of adults and two-thirds of high school students don't get enough sleep each night. Unfortunately, not getting enough good-quality sleep can cause much more harm than simply feeling tired. If you're sleep-deprived, you're less capable of making good decisions, less creative and more likely to be involved in a car accident or die at an early age. This may be partially due to the fact that not getting enough sleep can harm your cognitive performance. One study found that getting only five hours per night for several nights in a row decreases mental performance to the same extent as drinking enough alcohol to have a blood alcohol content of 0.06. As if that wasn't enough, poor sleep can make you feel more negative, less productive and act less ethically at work. Even worse, getting poor quality or not enough sleep also increases your chances of developing chronic diseases like obesity, heart disease or diabetes. And because it’s the time when your body clears waste and harmful plaques from the brain, it may be the reason why poor sleep seems to be associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Official recommendations for sleep duration are broken down by age group:

**Older adults (65+):** 7–8 hours  
**Adults (18–64 years):** 7–9 hours  
**Teenagers (14–17 years):** 8–10 hours  
**School children (6–13 years):** 9–11 hours  
**Preschoolers (3–5 years):** 10–13 hours  
**Toddlers (1–2 years):** 11–14 hours  
**Infants (4–11 months):** 12–15 hours

**Newborns (0–3 months):** 14–17 hours

**Tips for Better Sleep**

**Follow a regular schedule:** Going to bed at the same time each night helps regulate your inner clock. Following an irregular sleep schedule has been linked to poor sleep quality and duration.

**Create a calming bedtime routine:** Adopting a relaxing routine before bed can help you get in the mood to sleep. For example, listening to calming music has been shown to help improve sleep quality in certain groups.

**Create a comfortable environment:** Sleeping in a quiet, dark room at a comfortable temperature can help you sleep better. Being too active before bed, too warm or in a noisy environment is linked to poor sleep.

**Minimize caffeine, alcohol and nicotine:** Studies have linked caffeine, alcohol and nicotine use to poorer sleep quality. Try to avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening.

**Reduce your use of electronics:** The excessive use of cell phones and electronics has been associated with poor sleep quality. Even exposure to bright room lights before bed may negatively affect your sleep.

**Be more active:** Studies have shown that being inactive is associated with poorer sleep, and conversely, getting exercise during the day may help you sleep better at night.

**Practice meditation:** Meditation and relaxation training may help improve sleep quality and brain function, although research isn't clear.

Source: healthline.com