



WELLBEING



Insights

February 2015

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life

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February is **Heart Health** Month



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Small Changes can make a **Big Difference...**



February is Heart Health Month. It is never too late to try to improve your cardiovascular health.

Heart disease is still the number one killer of both men and women. The good news: it can often be prevented. While keeping your heart healthy is serious business, it can also be fun. In honor of American Heart Month, the following are five surprisingly enjoyable ways for you to show your heart some extra love.

1. Take a trip

As if you needed more reason to book those plane tickets; taking time off can cut your risk of a heart attack by almost one-third. Researchers suspect that vacation-takers may have better heart health because time off helps reduce stress, one of the biggest contributors to heart disease. Vacation time provides opportunities to do other good-for-your-health things,

like reconnecting with family and friends, getting outdoors and pursuing fun hobbies.

2. Indulge in chocolate

Go ahead, rip open that dark chocolate candy bar or treat yourself to a luscious chocolate-covered strawberry. It turns out that chocolate does not just tickle your taste buds; studies show small amounts of dark chocolate can lower your blood pressure, increase blood vessel health and improve your good cholesterol. The magic is in the flavanols; an antioxidant believed to be the active ingredient that gives chocolate its heart-healthy benefits. Just remember, a standard chocolate bar is between 200 and 300 calories, so indulge in moderation.

3. Sleep in

The next time you feel guilty about spending extra time in bed, just remember you are doing your heart a favor. As little as one extra hour of sleep can lower your risk of developing calcium deposits in your arteries, a precursor of heart disease. Sleep also



protects you from too much exposure to the stress hormone cortisol, which causes high blood pressure.

4. Soak up a little sun

This does not mean you should lie out in the sun until you look like a lobster. But 10 to 15 minutes of exposure a day can help protect your ticker. This is because sunlight stimulates the production of vitamin D, which some studies suggest may help your heart by preventing or treating high blood pressure and warding off the buildup of plaque in the arteries. It does not take much sun though, so be careful of overexposure.

5. Grab a drink

Raise a toast to your heart! Research shows moderate drinking of red wine — this is no more than one drink a day for women; two for men — may help lower your risk of heart disease by as much as 40 percent. The ethanol in alcohol helps to increase HDL (good) cholesterol and prevent blood clots.

Barbara Walters Gets Personal

Barbara Walters is a world renowned journalist. Her credits include being on television for over 50 years in such programs as the *Today* show, *ABC Evening News*, *20/20*, *The View* and those enlightening celebrity specials that dive into the personal lives of her guests.

What most people do not realize is that while the 80-year-old legend was reporting some of the most relevant human interest stories of our time, she was struggling with her own personal health issues. In 2010, Walters had aortic valve replacement surgery that may have saved her life.

Several years ago, after feeling pressure in her chest while climbing a staircase in Central Park, Walters found herself in a doctor's office, hearing that her chances of being alive in two years were 50 percent unless she had open-heart surgery.

While Walters typically does not talk about her personal life, on *The View*, she spoke of her surgery to appeal to women viewers. She used her personal experience and platform to urge women (specifically) to be wary. "Many women don't go to a doctor and have their heart checked. Men tend to do it before because we think it's a man's thing, but it's a woman's thing, too," she said on the show.

While Walters has officially retired, she is very active and healthy at 84 years old and recently hosted "The 10 Most Fascinating People of the Year of 2014."



Walters' confessed what was difficult, "Was deciding how personal I had to let it be. Even on *The View*, I don't talk about my personal life."



A composite image featuring a plate of fast food on the left and a red blood cell graphic on the right. The fast food includes a slice of pepperoni pizza, a burger with lettuce and cheese, and several pieces of fried chicken. The red blood cell graphic is a large, semi-transparent red shape with several smaller red blood cells scattered inside it, positioned over the fast food. The text 'Facts About Coronary Artery Disease' is written in a yellow, outlined font on the white background to the right of the food.

Facts
About
Coronary
Artery
Disease

Coronary artery disease (CAD) occurs when a substance called plaque builds up in the arteries that supply blood to the heart (called coronary arteries). Plaque is made up of cholesterol deposits, which can accumulate in your arteries. When this happens, your arteries can narrow over time. This process is called atherosclerosis.

Plaque buildup can cause angina, the most common symptom of CAD. This condition causes chest pain or discomfort because the heart muscle does not get enough blood. Over time, CAD can weaken the heart muscle. This may lead to heart failure, a serious condition where the heart cannot pump blood the way that it should. An irregular heartbeat, or arrhythmia, can also develop.

For some people, the first sign of CAD is a heart attack. A heart attack occurs when plaque totally blocks an artery carrying blood to the heart. It also can happen if a plaque deposit breaks off and clots a coronary artery.

Important Tests

Doctors can determine your risk for CAD by checking your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose, and by finding out more about your family's history of heart disease. If you are at high risk or already have symptoms, your doctor can perform several tests to diagnose CAD included in the chart below.

Treatment

If you have CAD, there are steps you can take to lower your risk for having a heart attack or worsening heart disease. Your doctor may recommend lifestyle changes such as eating a healthier diet, exercising and not smoking.

Medications may also be necessary. Medicines can treat CAD risk factors such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat and low blood flow. In some cases, more advanced treatments and surgical procedures can help restore blood flow to the heart.

| Test | What it Does |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ECG or EKG (electrocardiogram) | Measures the electrical activity, rate and regularity of your heartbeat. |
| Echocardiogram | Uses ultrasound to create a picture of the heart. |
| Exercise Stress Test | Measures your heart rate while walking on a treadmill. This helps to determine how well your heart is pumping blood. |
| Chest X-Ray | Creates a picture of the heart, lungs and other organs in the chest. |
| Cardiac Catheterization | Checks the inside of your arteries for blockage by threading a thin, flexible tube through an artery in the groin, arm or neck to reach coronary artery. This test can measure blood pressure and flow in the heart's chambers, collect blood samples from the heart or inject dye into the coronary arteries. |
| Coronary Angiogram | Monitors blockage and flow of blood through the heart. Uses X-rays to detect dye injected via cardiac catheterization. |



Top 10

Winter Travel Tips

Whether you are traveling to visit family, hit the slopes or soak up the sun, you want to feel your best when you reach your winter travel destination so that you can enjoy your trip.

Following these healthy travel tips can help make your winter getaway a success!

Protect little ones from germs.

If you will be traveling with kids this winter, you need to take steps to reduce germs. Children are often more susceptible to illnesses, particularly because they are more likely to touch their faces after handling objects. Be sure to pack hand sanitizer or antibacterial wipes and clean your child's hands frequently while you are on the go. For babies, bring along extra pacifiers or teething toys to have spares on hand if one ends up on the floor.

Prepare for travel-related illness.

The act of traveling itself can leave you feeling sick, making it important that you bring along products to help you combat symptoms. Motion sickness relief products are a must for any car trip. Bring along gum to help ease pain or fullness in the ears due to air travel. Make sure to pack some over-the-counter pain relievers if you are heading to the mountains, as altitude changes can cause headaches.

Ready your car for winter weather.

Traveling to your destination by car? Make sure that you are prepared for unexpected, severe winter weather conditions by packing an emergency kit. Inside, place a first aid kit or basic first aid supplies, plastic bags, a flashlight with



extra batteries, easy-to-eat foods like nutrition bars, bottled water and blankets. These items can help you and your family stay comfortable until help arrives or weather conditions improve.

Pick up some pill containers.

If you take prescription medications or supplements on a daily basis, it is important that you take steps to ensure that you have a complete supply while you are away. A weekend, week or two-week pill container can be pre-packed with your pills, making it easy to track what you have taken.

Keep your immune system running strong.

Traveling can lower your resistance and make you more susceptible to illness, making it important that you take steps to bolster your immune system. In the days leading up to your trip, make sure to eat a well-balanced diet and take a multivitamin if recommended by your doctor. Using an immune booster product before and during your trip can help your body be prepared to fight any germs that you encounter on the road.

Do not forget to pack the sun protection.

Sun protection is important in the winter months, so do not skip packing your broad-spectrum sunscreen. If you will be skiing or spending time outdoors, UV-protective sunglasses should also be worn to protect your eyes from dangerous glare.

Sanitize your seat.

If you are using any type of shared transportation such as an airplane, a train or a bus, be sure to sanitize your seat upon arrival. Use antibacterial

wipes to clean off any surfaces that you may touch, including the hand rest and any type of tray table. Before eating while on board, use hand sanitizer or an antibacterial wipe. Wash your hands after using the facilities and then follow up with hand sanitizer or a wipe for extra germ-fighting power.



Bring along your own hydration.

Many people become dehydrated when they travel. This can lead to feelings of fatigue, dizziness and weakness. Bringing along your own water can help ensure that you can stay hydrated while you are on the go and when you reach your destination. If you are traveling by air, be sure to keep your bottled water in your checked baggage and pick up a small bottle

to bring on the plane once you are through security.

Pack a few over-the-counter essentials.

Even if you will be staying in an area with plenty of shopping opportunities, it is wise to bring along some basic over-the-counter medications in travel-sized bottles or packets. Having pain relievers and indigestion relief products already with you can help you respond to symptoms quickly and avoid the high prices charged in many hotels, airports and train and bus stations. If someone in your family is prone to allergies, consider bringing an over-the-counter allergy relief product just in case symptoms strike.

Protect your neck and spine.

Sitting for long periods of time can cause pressure on the neck and spine that may result in pain and stiffness. Simply using a back support or a neck pillow when you are flying or riding can help provide support and ease discomfort.



Stuffed Pears



This recipe has a marvelous chocolaty flavor, but it is *low in fat* and super quick to make. Your family and guests will rave over this healthy treat.

Ingredients

- 2 large Bosc pears
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries or dried mixed fruit
- 1/4 cup low-fat granola
- 1/4 cup apple juice
- 1/2 cup low-fat vanilla frozen yogurt, divided into 4 small scoops

Preparation

1. Wash and peel pears; cut in half lengthwise. Use a melon baller or grapefruit spoon to remove core and seeds.
2. Place pear halves, with cut sides up, in a glass pie plate. Combine sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle evenly over pears.
3. Combine cranberries and granola; mound into hollows of the pear halves. Pour the apple juice in and around pear halves. Cover dish loosely with wax paper.
4. Cook in microwave on HIGH for 6 to 8 minutes or until the pears are tender when pierced with a knife. Let stand in the dish for 5 minutes. Use a large slotted spoon to transfer the pears to serving plates.
5. Drizzle juices from pie plate over pears and serve with low-fat vanilla frozen yogurt.

Nutrition Facts

Yields: 4 servings
Serving Size: 1 pear half with
1 scoop of frozen yogurt and about
1-1/2 teaspoons of juice.

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Calories | 176 |
| Total Fat | 2 g |
| Sodium | 32 mg |
| Fiber | 4 g |
| Total Carbs | 40 g |
| Protein | 3 g |



Superfood of the Month

Passion Fruit

Pleasantly sweet and tart, passion fruit is packed with plant derived nutrients. This fruit is often called “granadilla.”



Health Benefits of Eating Passion Fruit

Passion fruit is a great source of vitamin A, C, B2, B3, B6 and folate. The sour taste of passion fruit is a clue that it is high in ascorbic acid, also known as vitamin C, a powerful water-soluble antioxidant. In one serving of passion fruit (236g), there is over 70 milligrams of vitamin C; almost 120 percent of our daily value.

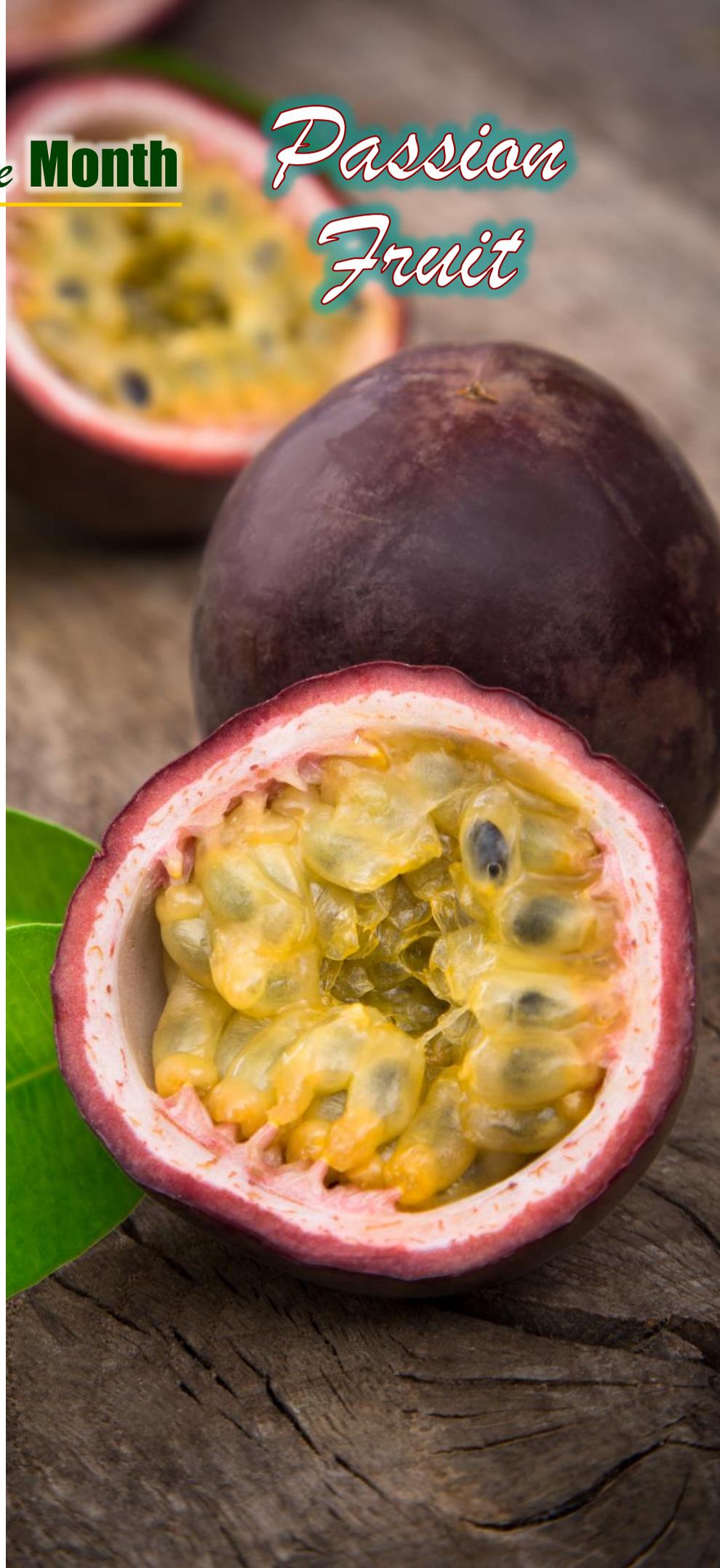
Passion fruit is also particularly high in vitamin A, playing a key role in helping you maintain a healthy immune system, healthy eyes, skin, teeth and bones. The best way to get vitamin A in your body is through whole, ripe, fresh fruits and vegetables. One serving of passion fruit provides about 60 percent of one’s daily value of vitamin A.



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 100 g

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| Calories | 97 |
| Total Fat | 0.7 g |
| Sodium | 28 mg |
| Fiber | 10.4 g |
| Total Carbs | 23.4 g |
| Protein | 2.2 g |
| Sugars | 11.2 g |



Exercise of the Month

Dumbbell Shrug

Type: Strength

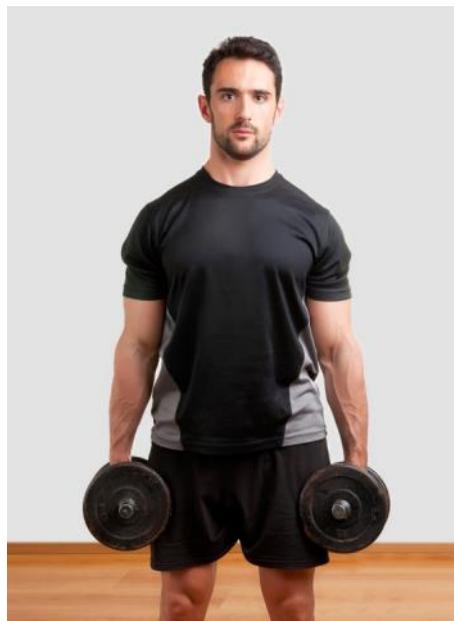
Main Muscle Worked: Trapezius (Traps)

Equipment: Dumbbell

Level: Beginner

1

Stand erect with a dumbbell in each hand (palms facing your torso), arms extended down the sides.



2

Lift the dumbbells by elevating the shoulders as high as possible while you exhale. Hold the contraction at the top for one second.

Tip: The arms should remain extended at all times. Refrain from using the biceps to help lift the dumbbells. Only the shoulders should be moving up and down.

3

Lower the dumbbells back to the original position.

4

Repeat for 2 sets of 5.

You should consult with your personal physician before starting any exercise routine.



Eat This...

Not That...

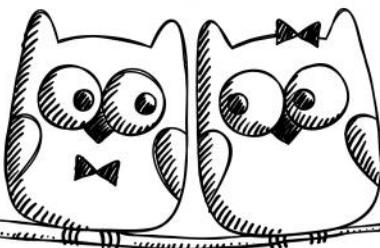


Herbs and Spices versus Salt

Herbs and spices make great salt substitutes. Using less table salt and salt in cooking may help lower blood pressure and reduce your risk for heart disease. To avoid salt without sacrificing flavor, experiment by making your own seasoning blends.

Sample Spice Recipe — Chinese five-spice blend for chicken, fish or pork — Combine 1/4 cup ground ginger, 2 tablespoons of ground cinnamon, 2 teaspoons of ground cloves and 1 tablespoon each of ground allspice and anise seed.

Happy Valentine's Day!



You are a hoot! I would love to exercise with you today!



WELLBEING
Insights

We would like your feedback and personal stories to use and feature in future publications.

Your Personal Wellness Story:

If you have a personal health or wellness story that you think would inspire others, please feel free to send a brief letter and your picture to our editor.

Gail@HealthierU.net

Thank you for reading and contributing. We sincerely hope that we can become a healthier part of becoming a healthier you.



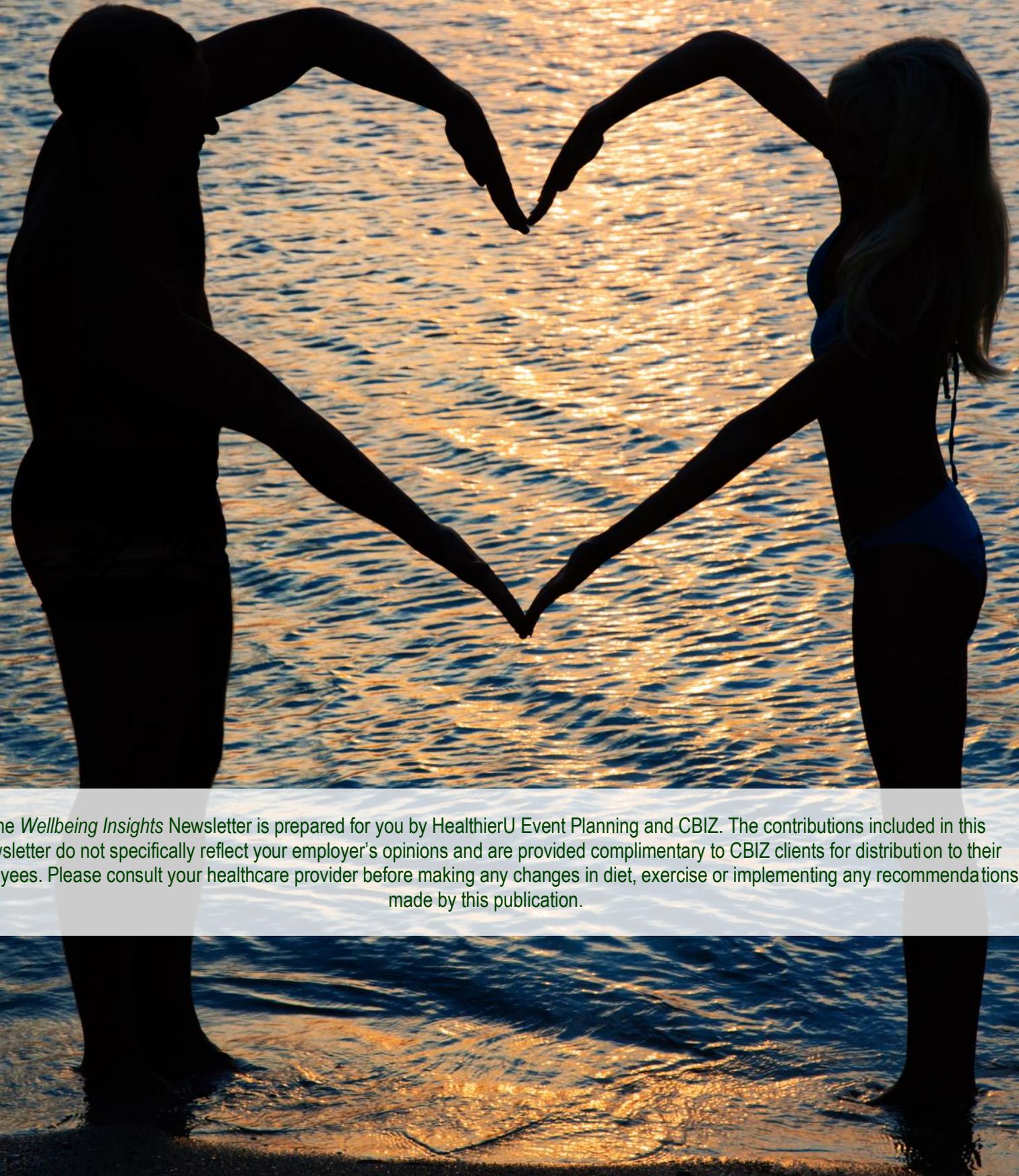
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