3 Ways to Say I Love You

A Good Meal. Eating well is a big factor in preventing heart disease. While salmon is “on the menu” this month, there are plenty of other heart-friendly choices too. Beyond the main course, dark, bittersweet chocolate shavings added to sugar-free pudding.

A NICE WALK. Your heart and body love and need physical activity. Bring a friend or loved one along with you, and do something fun and active together. Tour a museum or botanical garden, go dancing, or take a midnight stroll.

A GOOD TALK. Juggling career and home make for busy, busy people. This Valentine’s Day, make time for more heart-to-heart talks. Revisit your New Year’s goals with someone special and talk about why you chose those goals in the first place. A support network helps you reach your personal best.

10 Ways to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes
You can do a lot to prevent type 2 diabetes. Type 2 is the body’s inability to use insulin properly. Insulin helps your body use glucose from food for energy. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes, which causes several disabling health problems.

Even small changes can make a big difference in preventing type 2. Try these:

1. Ask your health care provider about your potential risk, especially if you are obese or have reached age 45.
2. Stop smoking. Tobacco use harms your overall health.
3. Get enough sleep. Too little—an average of five hours or less—may increase insulin resistance and lower glucose tolerance.
4. Try to fit in multiple small meals and nutritious snacks at regular times throughout the day. This promotes steady energy and blood sugar levels.
5. Plan for daily balanced nutrition with 3 ounces of whole grains, 2 cups of fruit, 2½ cups of vegetables and 5-6 ounces of lean meat, poultry or seafood.
6. Enjoy slow carbohydrates. High-fiber bread and whole grains produce a slower rise in blood sugar than their highly processed cousins—refined breads and pasta—that are typically low in fiber.
7. Move more every day. Activity helps your insulin work better.
8. Read food labels on packaged products. Choose options low in added saturated fat and sugars.
9. Ask your provider to help you define an action plan.
10. Make sure these changes fit well into your daily life. Given time, you’ll like the results and even enjoy your new habits.

Take these tips seriously if you have been diagnosed with prediabetes, higher-than-normal blood sugar levels but not high enough for a type 2 diagnosis. You can still beat it.

Diabetes Prevention on Your Plate
Your blood sugar level fluctuates throughout the day. It’s usually lowest in the morning and rises after each meal in response to food. Through these normal ups and downs, it still stays within a specific target range.

Studies have shown that losing even 5 to 10% of
your body weight can help control blood sugar. Here are some nutrition tips to keep blood sugar levels stable:

- Eat smaller portions at all meals and snacks.
- Choose foods with less fat, sugar, and salt.
- Include fish in your meals two to three times a week.
- Eat fruits that contain soluble fiber, such as apples, pears, oranges, and berries. Soluble fiber helps delay the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream.
- Enjoy non-starchy vegetables with every meal. They are low in calories and high in vitamins, and have little effect on blood sugar levels.
- Swap refined grains for whole grain oats and hulled barley. They contain fiber that helps delay carbohydrate absorption and the resulting rise in blood sugar.
- Replace meat with kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas, and soy products a few times a week.
- Drink water instead of sugary beverages.
- Cook more. Eat less processed and packaged food.

**Black Bean and Corn Quesadillas**

1-15 oz. can black beans, rinsed and drained
1-15 oz. can of corn (no salt added), drained
½ cup salsa
1 cup reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
10 6-inch flour tortillas

Mix first four ingredients together in a medium-size bowl. Spray frying pan with non-stick cooking spray. Place tortilla in a frying pan. Spoon ¼ cup vegetable mixture on the tortilla. Spread vegetable mixture evenly over the tortilla leaving ½-inch round the edge. Place another tortilla on top. Heat over medium heat for 2 minutes. Turnover and heat the other side for 2 minutes. Cheese should melt and vegetables should be hot. Remove from pan and divide into four portions. Serves 10.

**Nutritional Information:** Serving size: 1 serving equals: 210 calories, 6 total fat, 2.5g saturated fat, 10mg cholesterol, 370mg sodium, 32g carbohydrate, 5g dietary fiber, 9g protein

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**Whole Meal Salad**

2 cups salad greens (romaine, spinach, or mixture)
1 cup chopped vegetables and/or fruits, such as cucumber, frozen peas (thawed), onion, tomato, mango, avocado, carrots
1 ounce* chopped cooked chicken, beef, or pork, 1 hard cooked egg, or ¼ cup canned beans, drained
1 tablespoon chopped dried fruit, shredded cheese, or chopped nuts
2 tablespoons low-fat salad dressing

*one ounce is about ⅛ the thickness of a deck of cards.

Arrange greens on large plate or bowl. Add vegetables and/or fruits plus meat or beans. Add dried fruit, cheese, or nuts. Add dressing. Serves 1.

**Fiesta Skillet Dinner**

1 cup prepared brown instant rice (½ cup uncooked)
1 can (15.5 ounce) Mexican style tomatoes
1 can (15.5 ounce) black beans, rinsed
1 cup frozen corn
1 tablespoon chili powder
2 cups cooked diced chicken
½ cup 2% reduced fat cheddar cheese, shredded

Prepare the brown rice according to package directions. While the rice cooks, mix the tomatoes, black beans, corn, chili powder, and chicken in a large skillet. Cook over medium heat until heated through. Add the cooked rice and stir thoroughly. Top with shredded cheddar cheese. Serve hot. Makes 5 servings: 1½ cups

**Nutritional Information:** Serving size: 1 serving equals: 230 calories, 4.5g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 40mg cholesterol, 580mg sodium, 31g carbohydrate, 7g dietary fiber, 7g Sugars, 20g Protein, Vitamin A 20% DV, Vitamin C 15% DV, Calcium 15% DV, Iron 10% DV

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