



February 2019

Happy Valentines Day

February is Heart Health Month



Threats of the Lonely Heart

Loneliness can pose a significant threat to aging people with heart disease, especially those who live by themselves.

Research shows that elderly men and women living alone -- with no one to talk to -- are far more vulnerable to severe cardiovascular problems.

Humans are hardwired to rely on secure social surroundings. Without human interaction, they feel vulnerable and become hypervigilant about their safety. This hypervigilance alters sleep and body functioning, and increases the chance of death.

In July 2018, one study reported on nearly 13,500 Dutch patients living with heart disease, heart failure, or arrhythmia (abnormal rhythm).

Researchers had discovered that regardless of a patient's heart condition, age, education, and degree of smoking, loneliness was a factor in the more harmful results.

- 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



Why the heart symbol looks like it does

Follow your heart. Give your heart. Break a heart.

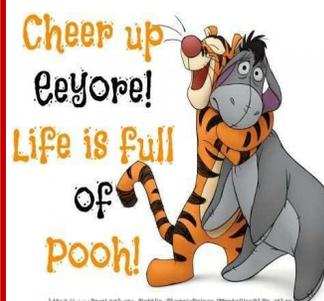
In all these sentiments, one probably imagines that familiar symbol rounded at the shoulders and pointed at the end.

It wasn't always that way. It evolved from the shape of a pinecone to pear-shaped and finally, by 1340, into the modern form we recognize today.

This stylized heart has become the standard symbol for all things love. It has been used in items as diverse as Martin Luther's personal seal in the late 1400s to Milton Glazer's famous 1976 logo: I (Heart) NY.



Hug it out!



Receiving a hug really can take the sting out of a bad day. People who got one on a day they had been involved in an argument had fewer negative and more positive emotions

than they did on days when they'd had a conflict but weren't hugged, according to a study of 400 adults.

Another finding: Hugs helped no matter whether they were given by a romantic partner, friend, or family member.

Source: PLOS one, Oct. 3, 2018

Safety Tip: Check Your Headlights. Now!

According to the AAA, headlights are dimming on older cars. Through the years, sunlight breaks down the protective plastic coatings on headlights causing them to become so yellowed or clouded that they may provide a mere 20 percent of the light they did when the car was bought.

Driving at night with headlights producing less than 80 percent of the required light is extremely dangerous and a risk that drivers should not take.

Car owners should routinely check the coating on their headlights and, when necessary, restore or replace them.

Convenient and inexpensive solutions are available that can dramatically improve the headlights of older vehicles.



Depending on where and how the vehicle is used, headlights can begin showing signs of deterioration in as little as three to five years.

Some makes and models seem to be more susceptible than others to clouding. It depends on the size, angle, and composition of the lens and whether the car is garaged or spends its life parked on the street. The effects can vary from just a slight haze to making lenses almost opaque.

- Carefully examine your headlight lenses before purchasing any restoration kits.
- If they appear bright, leave them alone.
- Before using any restoration kit, read through the manufacturer's instructions or watch their videos online, if available.

If the lenses are clear, but the lights appear to be dimmer than they used to be, you may need new bulbs. All bulbs dim over time and should be replaced after a few years.

Regularly clean your lenses with a household glass cleaner. Even a simple cleaning can make a big difference in how well you can see, especially if you live in an area with a lot of snow, ice, or road salt.

Oatmeal: A Heart-Healthy Food



Many foods can help keep your heart at its best. Here's one that is easy to work into your daily food plan.

Oatmeal: Oats are nourishing whole grains and a great source of vitamins, minerals, and cholesterol-lowering fiber. Research shows oats lower cholesterol levels, can reduce the risk of heart disease, keep you regular, and may help prevent certain cancers.

1. A warm bowl of oatmeal fills the belly for hours with its high fiber content. Top it off with fruit (such as blueberries or strawberries) for added fiber, vitamins, and minerals.
2. Add oats whenever you bake. Substitute up to one-third of the flour with oats in pancakes, muffins, quick breads, cookies, and coffee cakes for an added dose of fiber.
3. Use oats in place of bread crumbs in dishes such as meatloaf, meatballs, or breading on poultry.

Recipe idea: Make your own crunchy granola by baking three cups of oats at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes. Stir occasionally, then cool and mix in a variety of chopped dried fruit, nuts, and seeds.

Thought for the month



Among the things you can give and still keep are your word, a smile, and a grateful heart.

- Zig Ziglar

