Why a Plant-Based Diet is Good for You, Good for Your Heart

Researchers have been studying the effects of fats on health for years, and have found eating healthy fats from plants protects the heart from cardiovascular disease. There are several types of fats. Eating a diet high in saturated fat (the bad fat), mainly found in meat sources, increases the chance of developing heart disease, while unsaturated fats (healthy fat) help to lower it. Although some meats contain good fat, they also contain bad fat, therefore, researchers recommend eating more plants and less meat.

Beware! If you’re going to give it a try, what you replace meat with matters. In order to gain the benefits of a plant-based diet, it’s important to eat—you guessed it—plants! Replacing animal protein with processed food high in sugar, sodium, bad fat and calories will hurt more than help.

Replace foods high in bad fat with whole foods, meaning they’re as close to the way nature made them as possible.
- vegetables
- legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas, etc.)
- nuts
- olive oil
- whole grains

Not ready to go completely meat free? Reducing the amount of meat, particularly red meat, can still have a benefit. Try reducing the amount of meals with animal protein to only a few times per week. Meatless Monday is also a movement that suggests, if nothing else, going meatless just one day per week.

BONUS: Eating more vegetables and heart healthy fats substantially lowers type 2 diabetes risk. Plus, there’s a lot of fiber in this lifestyle, which keeps us feeling full and therefore helps maintain a healthy weight or weight loss.

Sources:
AHA Journals, Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials of Red Meat Consumption, 8 Apr 2019
Harvard School of Public Health, Healthy Plant-based Diet Linked with Substantially Low Type 2 Diabetes Risk

NEW CLASS!
Plant Your Own Herb Garden

Did you know gardening has wide ranging physical, social, emotional and financial benefits? Becoming one with nature is a proven way to reduce stress. Herbs are nutritious, add flavor to food, and are easy to maintain.

As part of total well-being, the Wellness Team presents a new class! In exchange for participation, we ask employees to provide feedback on the class.

Friday, March 6th, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
Gardenia Room, County Extension
12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

Contact wellness@pinellascounty.org to register.
(Maximum 25 people.)
The **thyroid** is a butterfly-shaped gland in the front of the neck which can’t be felt when normal-sized. The function of the thyroid gland is to take iodine, found in many foods, and convert it into thyroid hormones. The main hormone is thyroxine, also called T4. Thyroid hormones act throughout the body, influencing metabolism, growth and development, as well as body temperature.

There are several types of thyroid and parathyroid disorders with varying symptoms, so this article provides general information. Statistically, hypothyroidism (an underactive thyroid gland) is more common than hyperthyroidism (an overactive thyroid gland). The most common cause of hypothyroidism is Hashimoto’s disease, which is an autoimmune disorder. The exact cause of Hashimoto’s is unclear, but heredity may play a role. Having another autoimmune disorder, such as rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, or lupus, also increases the risk for Hashimoto’s.

Hypothyroidism signs and symptoms may include:
- Fatigue
- Increased sensitivity to cold
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Weight gain
- Hoarseness
- Muscle weakness
- Elevated blood cholesterol level
- Muscle aches, tenderness and stiffness
- Pain, stiffness or swelling in your joints
- Heavier than normal or irregular menstrual periods
- Thinning hair
- Slowed heart rate
- Depression
- Impaired memory
- Enlarged thyroid gland (goiter)

The **parathyroid** glands are two pairs of pea-sized, oval-shaped glands located next to the two thyroid lobes in the neck. They control bone and blood calcium levels. When your body needs calcium, parathyroid glands produce a hormone called parathyroid hormone (PTH). Your body reacts by absorbing more calcium from food and preventing calcium from being excreted in urine.

Hyperparathyroidism, the most common type of parathyroid disease, occurs when one or more glands are overactive. This may result in too much calcium in the blood—a condition called hypercalcemia. Usually, a benign tumor on the gland causes hyperparathyroidism.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force states that the current evidence is insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of preventive screenings for thyroid dysfunction in nonpregnant, symptom-less adults.

If you have symptoms of a thyroid disorder, you will require diagnostic testing. This may include thyroid function testing and ultrasounds.

Learn more about thyroid conditions at [www.thyroid.org](http://www.thyroid.org).

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**American Heart Association Heart Health Classes**

These classes are perfect for staff meetings, lunch & learns, In-Service Day, etc. Contact Nurse Amy (at amy_hertog@uhc.com or 464-5579) if you’d like to schedule any of these 30-60 minute (you pick) Heart Health presentations for your work site.

- Healthy For Good™: Healthy Eating
- Life’s Simple 7®: Heart Health at Work
- Heart Disease and Stroke 101
- Blood Pressure: The Silent Killer
NEW Savings from You Decide

New offers from You Decide include:

- FitBit family of fitness products
- Garmin gear to take your further in you active lifestyle
- KinderCare Learning Centers
- Premia Mortgage
- WW Weight Watchers Reimagined

Learn more by visiting [www.pinellascounty.org/hr/discounts](http://www.pinellascounty.org/hr/discounts) today!

Maintain Campaign Celebrating 2019-2020 Successes

Two hundred employees participated in the annual Maintain Campaign this year. The purpose of the challenge was to maintain healthy habits and weight during the holiday season. Roughly 88% of participants maintained their weight and lost approximately 173 pounds collectively!

Bragging rights and our fruit bowl trophy went to The Golden Girls, who took first place with 1,494 points! Jingle Bells of the Ball took second place with 1,425 points.

Making that commitment to find a healthy balance during the holidays takes dedication and teamwork. A common theme we heard from participants was how being a part of a team helped them hold each other accountable and motivated. Kudos to all the teams for working hard and staying on track. You rock!

The Golden Girls Team:
- Natasha Kinsley, Melinda Lemontagne (captain),
- Jemera Hollis, Wendy Isaacs, Ashley Skubal (Wellness Technician)

The Jingle Bells of the Ball Team:
- Laura Albenzio, Leena Delli Paoli (captain), Karen Lamb, Jennifer Gundel

Learn Something New in 2 Minutes

What’s the difference between good and bad cholesterol and why is it important? Take 2 minutes to watch the video [Good and Bad Cholesterol](#) or read the script.

We want to hear from you!

**TELL IT WELL**

**EMPLOYEE FEATURE**

If you or your spouse/domestic partner has improved their life by making healthy changes, *To Your Health* wants to feature and congratulate you! Contact Jane at [jgrannis@pinellascounty.org](mailto:jgrannis@pinellascounty.org) for details on how to share your story.
Wellness Champions gathered at the Super Bowl-themed winter meeting to celebrate their service and accomplishments in the County. **Keynote speaker Tracy Daniels** (BayCare master level practitioner) talked about mental health awareness and mental health in the workplace.

A giant thank you to all of them for their great work in wellness. We couldn’t do it without you!
**Most Valuable Players**

**Wellness is more than food and exercise.**

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**Pinellas County Softball Team**

Recreational sports are a great way to have fun with co-workers and meet new ones! Several teams have played over the years and they’re always looking for new members. All employees and their family members (especially pitchers!) are welcome to join. If you’re interested in playing in the spring season, please reach out to Jennifer Gundel or Diane Krok.

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**Kelly Green**, Risk Management. Kelly occasionally provides fruit for the break room to help his coworkers make healthier snack choices. He set up a Wellness Board that explains everything from the Wellness Incentives to tips for healthy eating and living a good life. He also sets an example of a healthy lifestyle by regularly going to the gym.

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**Isiah Waller**, Clerk’s Technology. Isiah shares a tip of the day from ChooseMyPlate.gov for shopping, eating and preparing healthy meals at home or for luncheons at the office. He also fosters a culture of health and wellness by volunteering his time to teach a Killer Abs & Back class in the Wellness Center twice a week!

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**Sheila Schneider**, Air Quality. Sheila set up a Wellness Board in her department to inspire fellow employees to make better food choices and encourage more physical activity. She sets an example by going to the gym on a regular basis and working out at home when the gym isn’t an option.

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**The Pinellas County Choir**

Singing is a form of wellbeing too! Doing something enjoyable brings out positive feelings. If you love to sing, consider joining the Pinellas County Choir! They perform at various County functions and events throughout the year. All are welcome. For more information, contact Lisa Freeman.

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**Linda Umberger**, Plant Operations. Linda inspired employees to watch their diet during the holidays by creating an engaging information board.

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Members of the Clerk’s softball team, “Meh”, in alphabetical order are Tim Burns, Elisa Degregorio, Jen Gundel, Diane Krok, Steve Krok, Ali Lamb, Dan Mangialomini, Greg Parker, Doug Templeton, Jen Wright.
Mark your calendar for **March 24th, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

Never been to the downtown Clearwater Wellness Center? Has it been a while? We’ve recently purchased all new equipment and updated the fitness spaces. Join us for a tour, body analysis, fitness class demos and so much more!

The facility is open 24/7 including weekends and holidays and is free to all employees, volunteers and retirees.

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### Strength Training 101 Demo

Does the thought of going to the gym intimidate you? All that crazy equipment puzzle you?

A gym can seem like a scary place. Our goal is to make you feel comfortable in the Wellness Center by providing you with a great experience.

Held each Friday, the Strength Training 101 is a one hour tutorial on the strength equipment in the Wellness Center. You’ll learn machine basics, how to set up and properly use each machine, and how to organize your workouts. There will be hands-on time to try the equipment with the instructor present.

The demo is available to those who’ve completed the Wellness Center orientation and is limited to 5 participants per class. Registration is required.

- **February 14**, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. - Upper Body
- **February 21**, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. - Lower Body
- **February 28**, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. - Upper Body

Contact Wellness at wellness@pinellascounty.org to register.

If demand is high, we will offer additional demos as requests come in.

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### Spotlight on Spinning

Spinning has become increasingly popular over the last decade, and for a good reason! Spin class provides a great cardiovascular workout and is easy on the joints. This type of exercise is suitable for all fitness levels because you control pedal speed and how much you move around on the bike.

A typical spin class lasts about 45 to 60 minutes and consists of a warm up, 30 to 45 minutes of drills, and a cool down. The instructor faces the room to guide participants through their ride. They give either verbal or physical cues to change resistance, pace and position. During the warm up, exercisers find their baseline resistance and move through sitting and standing positions to get the heart pumping. The next 5 to 10 songs include speed drills (fast pedaling for short bursts followed by a brief recovery) and climbs (turning up resistance to feel as though pedaling uphill). The class ends with a cool down and stretch.

If you haven’t tried spin but would like to, classes offered at the Wellness Center are a great place to start. They are only 30 minutes and are free to employees.

A list of classes can be found on the Wellness Center Group Class Schedule on the last page.

Spin class tips, even if it isn’t your first time:

- Arrive a few minutes early to set up the bike properly.
- If you have any injuries, let the instructor know, and listen to your body during class!
- Take it easy during the warm up and decide where your baseline is.
- Don’t forget a towel and water.

[Watch this short how-to video.](#)
Wear Red for Heart Health Awareness
February 7, 2020

Human Services-Belcher
Economic Development
Public Works
Human Resources
Marketing & Communications
Human Services-Admin Clearwater
Human Services-St. Pete
1999 - Increasingly, the salt-, sugar-, and fat-laden foods many large companies produced were being linked to obesity, and a concerned executive took the stage to issue a warning: There would be a day of reckoning unless changes were made.

Since that day, with the industry in pursuit of its win-at-all-costs strategy, the situation has only grown more dire. Every year, the average American eats thirty-three pounds of cheese (triple what we ate in 1970) and seventy pounds of sugar (about twenty-two teaspoons a day). We ingest 8,500 milligrams of salt a day, double the recommended amount, and almost none of that comes from the shakers on our table. It comes from processed food. It’s no wonder, then, that one in three adults, and one in five kids, is clinically obese. It’s no wonder that twenty-six million Americans have diabetes, the processed food industry in the U.S. accounts for $1 trillion a year in sales, and the total economic cost of this health crisis is approaching $300 billion a year.

In *Salt Sugar Fat*, Pulitzer Prize–winning investigative reporter Michael Moss shows how we got here. Moss’s explosive, empowering narrative is grounded in meticulous, often eye-opening research. You will never look at a nutrition label the same way again.
Strawberry Vanilla Whip

Enjoy this delicately textured dessert. When making it, be diligent about stirring or it will burn.

Ingredients

- 1½ cups nonfat milk
- ⅛ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons sugar
- ¼ cup sliced strawberries (½ cup for blender, ¼ cup for topping)
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 4 tablespoons canned whipped cream

1. In a blender, combine milk, vanilla, sugar, ½ cup strawberries and process until smooth, about 30 seconds.
2. Place strawberry mixture in a small pot over medium heat, whisk in cornstarch and heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture comes to a boil.
3. Immediately reduce heat, continue stirring and cook for 1 more minute.
4. Transfer warm mixture into individual serving cups.
5. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 2 hours.
6. Before serving, top each with about 1 tablespoon strawberries and 1 tablespoon whipped cream.

Nutrition Facts (per serving)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Fat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>121mg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Sugars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>45mg</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thandiwe Tenn, County Attorney’s Office, is the president and a paddler for the Bladerunners, a dragon boat team that practices at the Tampa Bay Dragon Boat Club. Dragon boats consist of 20 paddlers, one steerer and one drummer. Teams practice 3x per week at the Tampa River Center in downtown Tampa.

Have something wellness-related you’ve done that you want to brag about? Email photos to wellness@pinellascounty.org and the name and date of the race, walk, etc. We’ll give you a well-deserved “High Five!”
## February 2020 Group Fitness Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 to 7:30 am <strong>Spin</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Casey Hellriegel&lt;br&gt;(2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25)&lt;br&gt;<em>SPECIAL CLASS</em>&lt;br&gt;12:15 to 1:00 pm <strong>Lunch Crunch</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Jane Grannis&lt;br&gt;(2/3)</td>
<td>7 to 7:45 am <strong>Low Impact</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ashley Skubal&lt;br&gt;(2/12, 2/19, 2/26)&lt;br&gt;<em>SPECIAL CLASS</em>&lt;br&gt;12:15 to 12:45 pm <strong>Full Body Blast</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ashley Skubal&lt;br&gt;(2/18, 2/25)&lt;br&gt;NO CLASS 2/4</td>
<td>7 to 7:30 am <strong>Spin</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Casey Hellriegel&lt;br&gt;(2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27)</td>
<td>12:15 to 12:45 pm <strong>Full Body Blast</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ashley Skubal&lt;br&gt;(2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27)</td>
<td>12:15 to 1:00 pm <strong>Killer Abs &amp; Back</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ishiah Waller&lt;br&gt;(2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15 to 12:45 pm <strong>Spin</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ashley Skubal&lt;br&gt;(2/10, 2/17, 2/24)&lt;br&gt;Themed Class 2/10</td>
<td>12:15 to 12:45 pm <strong>Full Body Blast</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ashley Skubal&lt;br&gt;(2/18, 2/25)</td>
<td>12:15 to 12:45 pm <strong>Low Impact</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Isiah Waller&lt;br&gt;(2/5)</td>
<td>12:15 to 12:45 pm <strong>Full Body Blast</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ashley Skubal&lt;br&gt;(2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27)</td>
<td><strong>EQUIPMENT DEMO (NEW!!)</strong>&lt;br&gt;12:00 to 1:00 pm <strong>Strength Training 101</strong>&lt;br&gt;Registration required&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ashley Skubal&lt;br&gt;2/14 – Upper Body&lt;br&gt;2/21 – Lower Body&lt;br&gt;2/28 – Upper Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 to 6:30 pm <strong>Urban Line Dancing</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Jolanda Jordan&lt;br&gt;(2/3, 2/10, 2/17, 2/24)</td>
<td>5:30 to 6:15 pm <strong>Trigger Point</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Rickey Garza&lt;br&gt;(2/5, 2/12, 2/19, 2/26)&lt;br&gt;Pre attendance info: <strong>Trigger Point</strong>&lt;br&gt;12:30 to 1:30 pm <strong>Urban Line Dancing</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Leslie Henry&lt;br&gt;(2/5, 2/12, 2/19, 2/26)</td>
<td>6:00 to 6:45 pm <strong>Step &amp; Sculpt</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Lisa Foster&lt;br&gt;(2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25)</td>
<td>5:30 to 6:15 pm <strong>Killer Abs &amp; Back</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Isiah Waller&lt;br&gt;(2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27)</td>
<td>12:15 to 1:00 pm <strong>Killer Abs &amp; Back</strong>&lt;br&gt;Instructor: Ishiah Waller&lt;br&gt;(2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Tobacco Cessation

**Tobacco users: Time is running out!** If you attested “yes” to tobacco use during annual enrollment, you must complete an approved tobacco cessation program between **August 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020**, to qualify for the 2020 Tobacco Premium waiver.

To schedule a class at your location, you need a minimum of 3 participants. [Contact your Wellness Champion](#) or email the Wellness Department to make a request.

In addition to classes, you may satisfy the tobacco cessation program requirement with phone coaching or online lessons. Visit [www.pinellascounty.org/hr/tobacco](http://www.pinellascounty.org/hr/tobacco) to learn more.

Classes are subject to change. See [exercise class descriptions](#) and [satellite fitness center locations](#).

Pinellas County Wellness Program<br>(727) 464-4049<br>[www.pinellascounty.org/hr/wellness](http://www.pinellascounty.org/hr/wellness)

* Separate orientation required for Spin class.

All group fitness classes are held in the Wellness Center located in the basement of the old courthouse at 324 S. Fort Harrison Ave. in downtown Clearwater, and are free for all members. If you’re not a member yet, [email our staff](#) to schedule an orientation. The Wellness Center is now open 24/7.