March 2016 – Million Hearts® Messaging

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We Want to Know!
Do you like these messages? Do they meet your needs? Tell us how we're doing!

March's Million Hearts® Collaboration Focus: Improving Heart Health through Healthy Eating
March is here, and Americans are slowly starting to shake off the winter chill and think about spring. Take advantage of their (soon to be) leap forward and talk with them about the steps they can take to improve their heart health. We suggest talking with them about healthy eating this month as its National Nutrition Month and healthy eating helps prevent heart disease and stroke!

Did you know?

- Regularly consuming foods high in sugars, saturated fats, and salt contribute to cardiovascular disease risk factors, like obesity, high blood cholesterol and blood pressure, and diabetes
- A low-saturated fat, high-fiber, high plant food diet can substantially reduce one's risk of developing heart disease
- Only about 1 in every 10 Americans get the daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables (13 % and 9%, respectively)
- 90% of Americans consume too much sodium, which increases their risk for high blood pressure – a major contributor for heart disease and stroke

Eating healthy, nutrient-rich foods can help patients control risk factors associated with heart disease and stroke and protect them against other conditions that can affect the heart, like diabetes and obesity. As a health provider, you have the power to help Americans improve their eating habits. That's why this March, we are asking you to arm your patients and publics with tools and information to help them make heart healthier food choices!

For Health Professionals: Help Your Patients Make Heart Healthy Eating Choices during National Nutrition Month

As a health professional, you understand the benefits of healthy eating. But, as a human being, you know that it's not always easy to eat well. For people who are just starting to eat healthy, you're aware that it can be even more difficult. There are so many messages about what and how "we should" eat that it can be hard to decipher fact from fiction.

But you can help your patients crack the healthy eating code. How? Don't assume they know what the phrase "healthy eating" means. Share basic facts about nutrition with your patients and ask them if they understand. And give them specific ideas about where to start. If you need help having this important conversation with your patients, check out the resources below:

- Million Hearts® Healthy Eating & Lifestyle Resource Center – Use this resource to find heart-healthy recipes and easy meal plans. You can walk through the meal plan resource with your patients to layout personalized eating plans and shopping lists based on their current weight and how many pound they should lose each week.
- American Heart Association Sodium Infographics – Dispel myths about sodium – such as, "My blood pressure is normal, so I don't need to worry about how much sodium I eat," – and educate adults and children with these graphic, easy-to-understand materials.
- Sodium and Food Sources – Regardless of whether your patients want or need to lose weight, talk with them about reducing their sodium intake. CDC offers educational materials about salt that you can share and discuss with your patients.
- ChooseMyPlate.gov – Help your patients understand what their meals should look like. The *USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015 – 2020* offers information about portion sizes and education for patients, as well as tips and tools for health professionals.

Healthy eating is about more than weight loss, but it's important to understand that healthy eating could be a touchy subject for patients who have struggled with being overweight or obese. Be sure to educate and share resources in a non-judgmental way because improving patients' eating can save their lives.

I. Improving Heart Health through Healthy Eating Social Media Messages

Twitter

- #HealthCarePros: Need help talking to your patients abt #healthyeating? Resources here: http://1.usa.gov/RnJh9V.

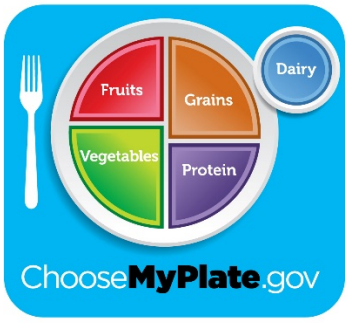
- DYK 90% of Americans consume too much sodium? Learn how much salt is in your favorite foods: http://1.usa.gov/1IqRYmG.

- .@MillionHeartsUS & @EatingWell have created FREE meal plans & shopping lists for #healthyeating: http://1.usa.gov/1B8irkW.

- #HealthCarePros: @MillionHeartsUS & @EatingWell offer free plans to help patients eat healthier: http://1.usa.gov/1B8irkW.

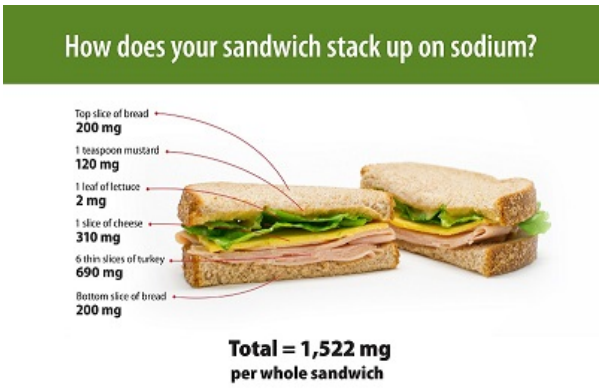
- #HealthCarePros: @American_Heart offers infographics to help educate patients abt sodium: http://bit.ly/1QsxqxU.

- DYK only 1 in every 10 Americans eats enough of produce. You can change that by sharing @MyPlate w/your patients



- Think healthy eating means hours cooking & spending a fortune at the grocery store? Think again: http://1.usa.gov/1B8irkW!

- Most people get too much sodium. How does your sandwich stack up? http://1.usa.gov/1zI2YMp



Facebook

- Being a healthy eater doesn't mean you make the perfect choice every time – it means you're educated about what you're eating and you generally make good choices. It's about being good to yourself and your heart. Learn more about how healthy eating helps your heart – and get your own meal plan and shopping list – at http://1.usa.gov/1B8irkW, courtesy of @EatingWell and @MillionHeartsUS.

- Health Care Professionals: You understand the benefits healthy eating can have for your patients. But, as a human being, you also understand that it can be hard to know where to begin. Share basic facts about nutrition with your patients this month and give them specific ideas about where to start.
- Health Care Professionals: Did you know that 90% of Americans consume too much sodium? Make sodium part the conversation. Share information about sodium and then dispel myths patients may have about sodium using the American Heart Association's cool sodium infographics.

Use these messages as you wish on your own communications channels. ***Please share the content in this newsletter!*** *If you have any questions or feedback about the Million Hearts® Collaboration Messaging Campaign, please contact April Wallace at april.wallace@heart.org.*

To view this document in Word, please click here.

II. Improving Heart Health through Healthy Eating Sample Newsletter Article

Talk Healthy Eats with Your Patients for Healthy Hearts this March

As health professionals, we understand that one of the most important ways we can protect our hearts is by eating heart healthy foods. We also know that most people aren't doing it. Only 9% of Americans consume the daily recommended amount of vegetables. Approximately 13% eat enough fruit. And the vast majority of Americans – 90%– consume too much sodium. These poor habits increase Americans' risk for high blood pressure and cholesterol, obesity and diabetes – major risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

Celebrate National Nutrition Month by talking with your patients about the importance of heart healthy eating and the steps they can take to do so. Share facts and resources about healthy food choices and be sure to address their questions. There are a lot of myths about food and healthy eating out in the world. As a health provider, you have the power to help Americans improve their eating habits. So, arm your patients and publics with tools and information to help them make hearth healthier food choices this month. And in case you need it, here are some resources that can get the conversation started with your patients:

- Million Hearts® Healthy Eating & Lifestyle Resource Center – Use this resource to find heart-healthy recipes and easy meal plans. You can walk through the meal plan resource with your patients to layout personalized eating plans and shopping lists based on their current weight and how many pound they should lose each week.

- American Heart Association Sodium Infographics – Dispel myths about sodium – such as, "My blood pressure is normal, so I don't need to worry about how much sodium I eat," – and educate adults and children with these graphic, easy-to-understand materials.
- Sodium and Food Sources – Regardless of whether your patient wants or needs to lose weight, talk with them about reducing their sodium intake. CDC offers educational materials about salt that you can share and discuss with your patients.
- ChooseMyPlate.gov – Help your patients understand what their meals should look like. The *USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015 – 2020*, offers information about portion sizes and education for patients, as well as tips and tools for health care professionals.

III. **Million Hearts® Partner Resources** Improving Heart Health through Healthy Eating

American Heart Association – Healthy Eating
http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Healthy-Eating_UCM_001188_SubHomePage.jsp

American Heart Association – Nutrition Basics
http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Nutrition-Basics_UCM_461228_Article.jsp#.VsoyWTbSn4g

American Heart Association – Sodium Infographics
http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Sodium-Infographics_UCM_454726_Article.jsp#.VsoiOjbSn4h

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Salt
http://www.cdc.gov/salt/food.htm

Million Hearts® – Healthy Eating & Lifestyle Resource Center
http://recipes.millionhearts.hhs.gov/

Million Hearts® – Easy Meal Plans
http://recipes.millionhearts.hhs.gov/meal-plans

United States Department of Agriculture – Choose My Plate
http://www.choosemyplate.gov/dietary-guidelines