

## **Love Your Heart in the Time of COVID-19**

For those with heart conditions or other medical conditions that may weaken your heart, keeping your heart healthy and protected during a pandemic is important. Cholesterol and blood pressure issues, as well as arrhythmias or cardiomyopathy, are heart conditions that can make contracting COVID-19 more serious.

Your heart is the most “essential” worker you have. It beats more than 110,000 beats a day and pumps about 2,000 gallons of blood throughout your body. This fist size muscle is so important, it only makes sense to keep it healthy and happy. To help support and improve your heart, try some simple changes that everyone can make.

### **Variety and Veggies**

Eating balanced and nutritious meals daily can help you reduce sodium and sugar intake, helping to maintain or lose excess weight, manage your blood pressure, control cholesterol. The nutrient dense foods that we consume help in providing those vitamins that support our bodies. Eating a colorful variety of fresh fruits and vegetables helps to support our health and our immune systems. Try new recipes throughout the week to add variety and enhance enjoyment. Visit [www.dinnertonight.org](http://www.dinnertonight.org) for delicious and healthy recipes that are lower in calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

### **Keep Moving**

Staying physically active can also improve and support your heart. It strengthens your heart so that it can efficiently pump blood throughout the body. A stronger heart also helps to keep your blood pressure under control. Try to take a brisk walk outdoors daily or keep active around the house; not only are you keeping social distance but improving circulation to help reduce stress.

### **Mask, Hands, & Distance**

Always remember to follow the CDC guidelines for COVID-19. Wash your hands frequently, continue to wear a mask, stay six feet apart from others, and avoid large crowds. For more information contact our local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office in Parker County: 817-598-6168, [parker.agrilife.org](http://parker.agrilife.org); and Palo Pinto County: 940-659-1228, [palopinto.agrilife.org](http://palopinto.agrilife.org). Also check out our COVID-19 hub of Extension resources at <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/coronavirus>.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is continuing Love Your Heart Series on Wednesdays in February at 12:00 p.m. on ZOOM. You can sign up at event at <https://tinyurl.com/LoveYourHeart21>. This is a four-week series. There are three classes left the topics will include: High Blood Pressure; Strokes; and Stress.

Also, Step Up Scale Down official begins Monday, February 8. Classes are on ZOOM and will take place at 12:15 and will meet 30 to 45 minutes. The classes take place for 12 Mondays. To sign up or for more information call 817-598-6168.