

# HeartBeat

February 2012 ROLLING MEADOWS PARK DISTRICT

## NEWS AROUND THE FITNESS CENTER

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our website at:  
[www.RMPARKS.org](http://www.RMPARKS.org)

### February is Heart Month

February is American Heart Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness of the leading cause of death in the U.S. — cardiovascular disease. One in three adults has some form of heart/cardiometabolic disease. Many of these deaths and risk factors are preventable and food choices have a big impact on your heart's health, even if you have other risk factors.

This February, celebrate American Heart Month by learning more about a heart-healthy diet that includes foods:

- **Low in saturated and trans fats.** Saturated fats are found in some meats, dairy products, baked goods and deep-fried and processed foods. Trans fats are found in some fried and processed foods. Both types of fat raise your LDL or "bad" cholesterol level.
- **High in omega-3 fatty acids.** Foods high in omega-3s include fish and olive oil.
- **High in fiber,** whole grains, fruits and vegetables. A diet rich in these foods helps lower LDL cholesterol and provides nutrients that may help protect against heart disease.
- **Low in salt.** A low-salt diet can help manage blood pressure and help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Also, be sure to take part in at least thirty minutes of physical activity every day. If you are at high risk for heart disease or already have heart disease, your first step should be to meet with a registered dietitian. Together with your health-care provider, your RD can help you lower your risk or improve your existing condition by developing a personalized eating and lifestyle plan.

### How To Use Your Exercise Ball

Exercise balls challenge by putting your body in an unstable environment. When you lie on the ball, your legs and abs immediately contract to keep you from falling off. Add an exercise to that (like a chest press or a crunch), and you've just increased the intensity of the movement. Bonus: Exercise balls are versatile enough to use for just about anything, including:

- **Weight training.** Use the stability ball as your new 'weight bench' to add difficulty to the movements and incorporate the muscles of your legs, butt and abs.
- **Abdominal training.** Doing crunches, twists and other traditional exercises on the ball adds difficulty to the movement by recruiting more muscles.
- **Sitting around.** Just sitting on an exercise ball can be a challenge and it's a great way to improve your posture when sitting in front of a computer or watching television. Practice by sitting on it and raising one foot off the ground and balancing or try some of these beginner ball exercises.
- **Flexibility, yoga and pilates exercises.** The ball is great for stretching and relaxing, such as in this relaxing stretch on the ball workout or this yoga on the ball workout.
- **Playing around.** It's a workout tool but, don't forget, it's also a ball. Your kids will love playing with it, just keep an eye on them so they don't hurt themselves.

### Fitness Quote of the Month

“Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.”  
-Mahatma Gandhi