



ChallengeME MONTHLY MINUTE

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Monthly topic:

Heart Health

Heart Healthy Recipe: Chicken Sliders

Dietitian's tip: Ask the butcher to grind skinless chicken breast to ensure leaner meat with less saturated fat.

Ingredients

- 10 ounces ground chicken breast
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1 fresh chili pepper, minced
- 1 tablespoon fennel seed, crushed
- 4 whole-wheat mini buns
- 4 lettuce leaves
- 4 tomato slices



Directions

Mix first 7 items together, refrigerate for 1 hour. Form into 4 patties. Grill/broil - internal 165 F. Serve on small whole-wheat buns with lettuce and tomato.

Five Quick Tips for a Healthy Heart

- 1- Eat healthy fats and avoid trans fats: Fat is necessary for a healthy diet, but not all fats are created equal. It's important to look for healthy ones like polyunsaturated, saturated and unsaturated fats. Trans fat is the kind that can increase levels of LDL cholesterol in the bloodstream. To incorporate healthy fats in your meals, opt for "loin" cuts of meats; bake, broil, lightly sauté, stir-fry, or roast foods in olive oil or nut oils; and experiment with adding chia seeds, flaxseeds, and nuts to salads and snacks.
- 2- Opt for reduced sodium. Having too much sodium makes the body hold on to excess fluid, which increases blood pressure and adds extra pressure on the heart.
- 3- Focus on omega-3 fatty acids. These powerful nutrients are found in many common foods, and they deliver health benefits across the board, from fighting depression and anxiety, to improving eye health, to reducing symptoms of ADHD in children, decreasing inflammation, decreasing BP/cholesterol.
- 4- Get your fruits and veggies. This is always a healthy-eating go-to tip, as fruits and vegetables are good for you across the board. In terms of heart health, both fruits and vegetables are high in potassium and other nutrients that can lower blood pressure and prevent cardiovascular disease.
- 5- Plan, plan, plan. Too often, we find ourselves tired from a long day or pressed for time with busy schedules, and we opt for quick, unhealthy meals or snacks on the run. To offset this, a little planning can go a long way for heart health.

Stress & Heart Disease - What's the Link?

Having too much stress, for too long, is bad for your heart.

The stress itself can be a problem. It raises your blood pressure, and it's not good for your body to constantly be exposed to stress hormones. Studies also link stress to changes in the way blood clots, which makes a heart attack more likely.

The way you handle stress also matters. If you respond to it in unhealthy ways -- such as smoking, overeating, or not exercising -- that makes matters worse. On the other hand, if you exercise, connect with people, and find meaning despite the stress, that makes a difference in your emotions and in your body.

ChallengeME
MaineDOT Healthy Workforce

Be sure to visit the ChallengeME website:

- > Sign up for Health Coaching
- > Listen to the ChallengeME Podcasts
- > Complete your WellStarME for the 5% discount
- > Monday's in Feb are Mindful Mondays
- > Feb. 4th is Wear Red for Heart Disease Awareness

<http://maine.gov/mdot/challengeme>

Coming Up March: Nutrition

Comments, questions, ideas, or submissions?
Please email: kara.a.aguilar@maine.gov