



live well, work well

## Branchburg Township School District

Employee Health Benefits Bulletin

February 2016

*Winter is here to stay for a few more months, so make the most of all it offers. February is American Heart Month... learn how to take care of your heart and try a heart-healthy recipe for Valentine's Day!*

## Your 2016 Benefits

### Your Heart Health & Horizon

Since February is [American Heart Month](#), take some time to learn how Horizon can help with heart health.

Get started by knowing the [risks](#) and preventions for heart disease, and [see your doctor](#) regularly to check your "numbers" like [Body Mass Index](#) (BMI), blood pressure, and cholesterol. Plus, Horizon offers [Chronic Care Programs](#) for heart conditions like Coronary Artery Disease and heart failure. Talk with your doctor about the best steps for you.

### Annual Benefits Reminder

Horizon provides annual benefits for certain preventive care

services like routine physicals, lab work, and screenings. Now that 2016 is here, you can access these annual services in-network at no charge. Also, be aware that any deductibles that apply to your plan



renewed on January 1, 2016. See your plan overviews for more details.

### 1095 Tax Forms

The Affordable Care Act requires insurers and employers to provide you with IRS 1095 forms to report if you had qualifying health coverage (i.e., minimum essential coverage) throughout 2015; those who did not

may need to pay a tax penalty, or a shared responsibility payment.

Review the 1095 forms that you receive for accuracy. *Note: you do not need to include the forms when filing taxes with the IRS;* keep the forms with your tax copies as proof of qualifying coverage. For more details, visit [www.horizonblue.com](http://www.horizonblue.com).

## National Health Observances

### February

#### American Heart Month

American Heart Association

[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

#### National Wear Red Day / February 6

American Heart Association

[www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org)

### March

#### Colon Cancer Awareness Month

American Cancer Society

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

#### National Kidney Month

National Kidney Foundation

[www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org)



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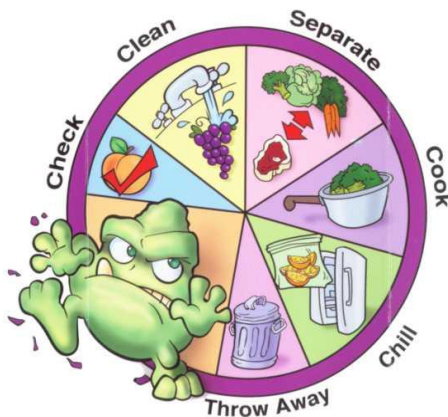
## Your Heart Health

No other disease is as detrimental to American health and welfare as cardiovascular disease. At any given time, an estimated 83.6 million American adults are affected by some form of cardiovascular disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that heart disease is our leading cause of death, causing one in three deaths (over 800,000) annually.

Heart disease is caused by atherosclerosis, a buildup of plaque in the inner walls of the arteries, which narrows, slows, or blocks the flow of blood to the heart. The controllable risk factors for developing heart disease include:

- High blood pressure
- High LDL cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- Smoking
- Being overweight or obese
- Lack of physical activity
- Using illegal drugs, such as cocaine

Warning signs depend on the type and severity of your heart condition, but you should know the common symptoms of heart disease, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain or discomfort, weakness, fatigue, or heart palpitations. See your doctor if you exhibit any of these symptoms. Visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for more info.



## Preventing Food Illnesses

Each year, approximately 1 in 6 Americans get sick from food poisoning. It's not uncommon to hear about food being recalled or a new foodborne illness outbreak. Most people recover without any long-lasting effects; however, those who are pregnant, the elderly, or those with chronic conditions are more at risk for developing complications.

Prevent foodborne illness at your home by being conscious of food safety guidelines. For instance, avoid

Eating raw or spoiled meats and eggs by checking expiration dates before purchasing and preparing food. Wash hands, cutting boards, and knives with antibacterial soap and hot water after handling raw meat, seafood, or eggs. Never serve meat on the same plate used when it was raw. Check meat is fully cooked with a food thermometer.

In addition, avoid thawing food at room temperature; instead, defrost foods in the refrigerator and do not

refreeze food once it's been fully thawed. Remember to refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. And wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating, especially those that will not be cooked (like fresh apples or pears) in order to prevent foodborne illness.

## Healthy Recipe *Fudgy Fruit* Perfect homemade for Valentine's Day!

### Ingredients

- 6 Tbsp. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 large bananas, peeled and quartered
- 8 large strawberries
- ¼ cup unsalted peanuts, chopped

### Directions

- Place chocolate chips in small microwave safe bowl; heat on high for 10 seconds.

- Repeat until chocolate is melted, about 30 seconds.
- Place fruit on a small tray covered with a piece of waxed paper.
- Use a spoon to drizzle the melted chocolate on top of the fruit.
- Sprinkle the fruit with chopped nuts.
- Cover the fruit and place in the refrigerator for 10 minutes or until the chocolate hardens.
- Serve chilled. Makes: 4 servings