

## February is Heart Month

It seems like most holidays focus on food, and usually include something sweet like candy or chocolate. If you're looking to make this Valentine's Day a little healthier for you and your family, consider starting the day with a fruit-filled smoothie or a yogurt parfait.

Fruit is a quick, easy, and healthy Valentine's treat. Consider using these two cute ideas using clementines/Cuties and applesauce. The messages read, "Happy Valentine's Day Cutie" & "You're AWESOMEsauce Valentine." Be creative and think outside the box. Visit with your children about healthier alternatives and let them help you pick them out at the store. Check out the "Non-food Valentine Ideas" below for ideas for childcare or school.

### Non-food Valentine Ideas

- Friendship bracelets
- Toy cars
- Bubbles
- Sidewalk chalk
- Balloons
- Glow sticks
- Bouncy balls
- Pencils
- Erasers

### Valentine's Day Snack Mix

2 cups pretzels

2 cups heart-shaped cereal

1 cup freeze-dried strawberries

1/2 cup chocolate chips

Stir all ingredients and enjoy!!!

## Get Heart Smart about Sodium

Americans on average get over **3,400 mg of sodium a day**, with the majority coming from packaged, processed foods bought at the store and restaurant/fast food.

2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/> recommend "For most people ages 14 years and older, sodium intake should not exceed **2,300 mg/day**. Intake below this level is recommended for children younger than 14 years old and people who have prehypertension or hypertension (i.e., high blood pressure)."

The most effective ways of reducing sodium is to choose more fresh, less processed foods and to use less salt during cooking. Use flavorings other than salt, such as spices and herbs, citrus juices and zest and flavored vinegars.

