

# Laneview School Healthy Valentine's February 2015

In an effort to stay in accordance with our Board Policy on Nutrition and Health, we are encouraging our students to enjoy a Healthy Valentine's Day. It's that time of year again when sweet treats abound, and celebrating Valentine's Day seems to be all about eating chocolate (and, yes, lovely valentines too). February is also American Heart Month, designated in 1963 by the American Heart Association as the time to develop healthy habits for your heart health.

Hearts may be the top symbol of Valentine's Day, but with high-calorie treats abounding at parties, the holiday can be anything but heart-healthy. With a little forethought, however, it isn't hard to create a memorable event that shows kids how to have fun without overindulging (and maybe even get their hearts pumping, too)!

**Why Be Concerned?** Many parents take on the attitude to "let kids be kids" and not worry about what they consume on special occasions. Yet as all the holiday parties, birthday treats, and reward goodies pile up over the course of the year, so can the weight and the assumption that we need junk food to be happy. According to the Center for Disease Control, 16 percent of children are currently obese, and studies show that early weight problems can lead to diabetes and heart disease, even in childhood.

Even the youngest Americans are turning up with precursors of heart disease: 61% of overweight 5 to 10 years olds already possessed at least one major risk factor for heart disease, and 26% possessed two or more factors! With heart disease remaining nation's #1 killer America needs to wake up and change its ways.

What a better time than Valentine's Day! And as you're surrounded by hearts in all shapes and forms, this is a great opportunity to show those you care for how you care about their heart.

**Heart Healthy Snacks** It's easy to give your kids chocolate and sugar on Valentine's Day. But it's also easy to serve them snacks and meals that are healthy while keeping with the Valentine's Day theme. You'll feel better at the end of the day, and so will they! Instead of the usual candy and food colored icing, here are some Valentine's Day snacks that fit into a healthy diet:

- Fruit Kabobs with Yogurt Dip - Use red or pink plastic skewers and load them up with strawberries, cherries, watermelon and red seedless grapes. Use a tiny heart shaped cookie cutter for the berries and watermelon to add to the festive look. Low-fat vanilla or strawberry yogurt works well as a dip.
- Mini- Fruit Smoothies – Combine a blend of strawberries, raspberries, and bananas in your blender, with a little apple fruit juice added for liquid. Serve them in Dixie cups and decorate with cocktail umbrellas.
- Gelatin Hearts – Boil 1 cup of water, add 1/2 cup of grape juice and 1 packet of unflavored gelatin. Stir until dissolved. After it cools slightly, add another 1/2 cup of grape juice. Pour into heart shaped molds and refrigerate until firm. If you don't have heart shaped molds, you can pour the gelatin mixture into a baking pan and then cut out heart shapes with a cookie cutter after it is firm.
- Strawberry Roll-ups – Spread low-fat strawberry cream cheese evenly across a tortilla. Add a little strawberry jam down the center. Fold in the edges of the tortilla, about two inches. Now roll the tortilla up- jelly roll style. Slice into 2-inch bites for the perfect Valentines Day snack.

The best way to show our kids how much we love them is to give them a healthy heart!

Give kids the gift of love – knowledge! Teach them about their heart, how to find their heart beat and what they should do to keep their hearts healthy.