

National

American Heart Month

February 2026

Heart-Healthy Tips

- Stay Physically Active
- Eat a Heart-Healthy Diet
- Monitor Blood Pressure Regularly
- Keep Cholesterol in Check
- Manage Stress
- Maintain a Healthy Weight
- Quit Smoking and Limit Alcohol
- Keep Up With Regular Checkups
- Bonus Tip
- Heart-Healthy Quick Fix Recipe

★ February 23rd Event: Dementia Caregiver Support Group

- Dementia - Loved One/Caregiver Virtual Reality Experience
- Resources

"The heart of a caregiver is both a fortress and a garden, protecting and nurturing those within."

You are not alone.
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Dementia Caregiver Support Group

Basehor Community Library:

February: Meets in person on Monday, February 23rd at 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

(See inside for 2026 new Support Group Schedule)

Join us in this safe supportive environment for caregivers.

Co-Leaders: Dr. Maritza Buenaver, Geriatric Psychiatrist

and Cathy Grigsby, MS, caregiver support specialists,

will guide us as we share our experiences. Anyone is welcome to join us.



February 2026 is National American Heart Month

Heart-Healthy Tips

1. Stay Physically Active (Safely & Consistently)

Regular movement keeps the heart muscle strong and improves circulation.

Simple ideas: Brisk walking, chair yoga/gentle stretching, light resistance band exercises, water aerobics

👉 Aim for about **30 minutes most days**, but always adjust to ability and physician guidance.

2. Eat a Heart-Healthy DietA diet similar to the Mediterranean diet supports heart health.

Focus on: Fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish (especially salmon, sardines), olive oil, nuts and seeds.

Limit: Processed foods, excess salt, sugary drinks, saturated fats.

3. Monitor Blood Pressure Regularly

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke: **✓ Check it regularly, ✓ Take medications as prescribed, ✓ Reduce sodium intake.**

Many pharmacies and clinics offer free blood pressure checks.

4. Keep Cholesterol in Check

Healthy cholesterol levels reduce plaque buildup in arteries.

Tips: Eat more fiber, avoid trans fats, stay active, follow doctor's guidance on medications if needed.



➡ **“Reminder—2026 New Support Group Schedule”**

Beginning 2026, the Dementia Caregiver Support Group meetings at the Basehor Library will be held on the fourth Monday of each month.

FEBRUARY EVENT: Dementia Caregiver Support Group
Monday, February 23rd—Basehor Community Library
1400 158th St., Basehor, KS—6:30 p.m—7:30 p.m.

*In a safe and welcoming environment, the Dementia Caregiver Support Group gives caregivers the opportunity to ask questions and share their experiences with others in similar circumstances. **The support group will be led by:***

Co-Leaders: Dr. Maritza Buenaver, Geriatric Psychiatrist and Cathy Grigsby, MS
caregiver support specialists.

Heart-Healthy Tips (cont'd)

5. Manage Stress

Chronic stress raises heart rate and blood pressure.

Healthy stress relievers: Deep breathing, prayer or meditation, time with loved ones, listening to calming music, emotional health is heart health.

6. Maintain a Healthy Weight

Extra weight makes the heart work harder.

Even small weight loss (5–10% of body weight) can: Lower blood pressure, improve cholesterol, reduce strain on the heart.

7. Quit Smoking & Limit Alcohol

Smoking damages blood vessels and dramatically increases heart risk at any age.

If needed, ask a healthcare provider about:

Smoking cessation programs, support groups, nicotine replacement options, alcohol should be limited and discussed with a physician.

8. Keep Up With Regular Checkups

Routine medical visits help detect problems early.

Important screenings: Blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, heart rhythm checks, early detection prevents complications.

♥ Bonus Tip: Stay Socially Connected

Loneliness is linked to higher heart risk in older adults.

Regular interaction with family, friends, or community groups supports both emotional and physical health.

Heart-healthy, grab-and-go recipe with little prep!

“5-Minute Mediterranean Power Bowl”

Why It's Great for Caregivers

- No cooking (with pre-cooked grains)
- Keeps energy steady
- Supports healthy cholesterol
- Portable

Stores well for 2–3 days

Ingredients (Serves 1–2)

- 1 cup cooked quinoa (microwave packet works perfectly)
- 1/2 cup canned chickpeas (rinsed)
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes (halved)
- 1/2 cucumber (chopped)
- 2 tablespoons feta (optional)
- 1–2 tablespoons olive oil
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Pinch of salt & pepper

Optional: Pre-cooked salmon or grilled chicken for extra protein

Directions (5 Minutes)

1. Toss quinoa, chickpeas, tomatoes, and cucumber in a bowl.
2. Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice.
3. Add feta, salt, and pepper.
4. Stir. Done.

Eat immediately or pack into a container and refrigerate.

Heart-Healthy Benefits

- **Olive oil** supports healthy cholesterol.
- **Chickpeas** provide fiber (helps lower LDL).
- **Quinoa** offers plant protein and magnesium.
- **Tomatoes** contain lycopene, linked to heart protection.

Resources



A JOURNEY THROUGH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE "VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE"

Find out what everyone is raving about!

"Enlightening" "Eye-Opening" "Empowering" "Informative"

Free Distance Learning Experience Through Zoom..

(Alzheimer's/Dementia/Lewy Body/Parkinson's)

Experience a journey through their eyes.

(A must for caregivers, families, doctors/fellows/residents/staff.)

Free Virtual Reality Distance Learning is made possible

by Dr. Maritza Buenaver's Iowa-GWEP/HRSA Grant.



**It's easy to schedule a
Virtual Reality Session.**

***Just email your preferred
VR Session date and time to:***

vaCaregiverEducation@gmail.com

***Also, ask about our other
Virtual Reality Experiences including:
Vision/Hearing Loss and End-of-Life.***

- **Dr. Maritza Buenaver—Dementia Education, Next Session: April 6, 2026**
> Dementia Education Sessions are held Every Other Month on the "First Monday" of that month, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at the Basehor Library
- **> Dementia Caregiver Support Group**, Monthly, on the "Last Monday" of that month, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at the Basehor Library
- **www.Facebook.com—Basehor Library—Dementia Caregiver Support Group**
- **The Deeper Window Association, Vicki Lichtenauer, vlichtenauer@scls.org**
Caregiver Support Group, Monthly, 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 5:45-7:30 p.m.
Leavenworth, KS— Let's Roll Mobile Respite, Tuesdays, 11:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.
- **www.LeavenworthCounty.gov—Council on Aging**
- **www.ALZ.org—Alzheimer's Association**