



Improving Heart Health By [Dawn Baker, RHN](#)

February is Heart Health Month; how are you taking care of your heart? Cardiovascular disease affects approximately 2.4 million Canadian adults. There are many ways in which we can have a positive impact on our heart health to help reduce our risk of heart disease. Here are some helpful tips on how you can take control of your health and reduce your risk, as well as a handy 1-day heart healthy meal plan.

Stress Management

- Exercise – brisk walking 15-30 minutes a day or a trip to your local fitness club at least 3 times per week.
- Don't sweat the small stuff! Keeping in check the curveballs life throws at us.
- Breathe! We tend to take more shallow breaths when stressed. Upon waking,



take 3-5 deep inhalations with slow exhalations. It works!

- Do something nice for yourself. Have a massage, go for a walk in nature, visit your local spa to unwind.
- Get enough sleep. Turn off all electronics 30-60 minutes before bedtime.

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Leftovers? UGH!! By [Valerie Piccitto, RHN](#)

Growing up as a kid, leftovers never tasted as good as they did when they were first prepared. They were always sort of mushy and lifeless too - although, I'm sure part of this was due to the fact we would reheat leftovers in the microwave.

SIDE NOTE: I haven't owned/used a microwave in over 6 years. I prefer to avoid them at all costs and will simply reheat my food on the stovetop or repurpose my leftovers so that I don't require reheating. I want to retain as much nutritional value as I possibly can and microwaving essentially zaps nutrients from your food. You can read more about the dangers of microwaves [here](#) or watch this video.

Although I know many people who will happily repurpose their leftovers, I know there are also many people who find leftovers sub-par, boring and questiona-

ble. I think it's about time we change that outlook!

In our home, we almost always rely on leftovers from our dinner to create our lunches.

Why?

Because it is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to stay on track with our healthy eating goals. Not to mention, it makes meal planning a breeze because I essentially only have to meal plan for one meal - our dinners. What about breakfast, you wonder?! We keep breakfast pretty simple around here: smoothies, chia seed puddings, hot cereal and eggs - all things that can be thrown together in 5 minutes and we always have the ingredients we need on hand. Planning my meals like this allows me to focus my efforts on one meal each day - our dinner. **Continued on page 3...**

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**Happy
Heart-Healthy
Eating**



Spicy Chocolate Truffles by Ashleigh Grange, RHN

Makes 16

Ingredients for truffles

- 2 cups cooked black beans or 1 x 19-oz. can of organic black beans (if using canned, drain and rinse VERY well)
- 3 Tbsp. almond or other nut butter
- ½ cup raw cacao powder
- 2 Tbsp. melted coconut oil
- ½ cup raw honey (or replace with maple syrup for a vegan substitute)
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- ¼ tsp. ground cayenne

Ingredients for coatings

- ¼ cup real maple syrup

Various coating ingredients such as raw cacao, melted chocolate, shredded coconut, crushed nuts such as pecans, almonds or pistachios, crushed goji berries or other coatings of choice. If using melted chocolate, omit the maple syrup.

Directions

Add all truffle ingredients to a high-powered blender or food processor and blend until smooth.

Add the mixture to a medium-sized bowl, level the top with a spoon, and place in the fridge to chill for at least 2 hours. After that time the texture should be thick and set.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Using a small ice cream scoop or a spoon, measure out equal amounts of the truffle mixture (about 2-3 Tbsp.) and roll them until smooth. If the mixture is still sticky and hasn't firmed up enough to roll, place the truffles in the freezer for 15 minutes and then re-roll them until smooth.

Chill the truffles in the fridge while you prepare the coatings.

Place the maple syrup and each of your chosen coatings into separate finger bowls for coating.

Dip each truffle in the maple syrup and then roll it in your chosen coating. Repeat for each truffle.

Freeze for 30 minutes.

Serve.



Grilled Rice Wrap and variations by Tanya Sullivan, CHNC

(makes 1 wrap)



This recipe is very customizable, but I will outline the basic ingredients and method below. I find this a great way to use leftovers rather than always starting from scratch. This has become my favourite at home hot lunch. Pair it with a cup of soup or some raw vegetables if you're really hungry, but I find this lunch gets me through the afternoon, with steady blood sugar. If you want to make 2 wraps at a time,

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double the recipe and cook all the vegetables at once, and assemble and heat 1 at a time. My husband loves these too.

Ingredients:

1 Rice tortilla (I use Food for Life)

2 tsp coconut oil (divided)

1/2 medium onion, sliced

1 cup green veggie (asparagus, broccoli, mixed greens etc.), plus possibly leftover vegetables

3-4 ounces leftover cooked protein, sliced (chicken, steak, fish, or beans if you want to go vegetarian)

1/3 avocado

Seasoning salt to taste (I like Vogel's Herbamare)
Fresh herbs, if available

Instructions:

Melt 1 tsp. coconut oil in large skillet (preferably cast iron or stainless steel).

Sauté onions until translucent. Add green vegetables to pan. If longer cooking like asparagus, add some water and put a lid on pan to steam until tender, stirring occasionally.

When almost done remove lid to allow liquid to evaporate.

Once cooked set aside onto plate and add remaining coconut oil to pan.

Lay in rice tortilla, and load one side with protein, veggies, avocado and seasonings. Leave in pan until warm and soft, taking care **not** to let oil get too hot (it will start to smoke, that's not good).

Fold wrap over contents and slide to a plate.

Enjoy!

Editor's Note: You could also enjoy this wrap with a sprouted, whole grain tortilla.

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I prefer to avoid having my leftovers sit in the fridge too many days in a row. From a food safety perspective, leftovers should never be eaten past 3-4 days. Truthfully, on this point I'm fussy myself. I try to plan our dinners so that we can enjoy the leftovers the very next day. Food is best eaten fresh in my opinion.

SO, HOW DO I DO THIS EXACTLY? HOW DO I CREATE LEFTOVERS OUT OF MY DINNER AND STILL MAKE THEM FEEL FRESH AND EXCITING?

1. Make Plenty

I always double up on my dinner recipes for the week. Making extra means that we both have leftovers the next

day for a healthy lunch. If I'm going to the effort of making a proper dinner, I might as well make twice as much - it's minimal effort to double the recipe in the moment and cuts down on my time in the kitchen.

TIP: With any of my dinner recipes that include veggies, I'll take the extra and roast them on a large baking sheet with some olive oil, sea salt and fresh black pepper.

2. Grains

Another way to lend some excitement to your leftovers is adding it to a bowl of grains. If my dinner calls for steamed or roasted veggies, I'll make loads of them and use the leftovers to make a grounding bowl of veggies and grains with a delicious dressing (more on this below).

Pressed for time during the week? I like to use Sundays to prep a few things ahead of time. I'll cook off a few different things like millet, quinoa or brown/wild rice to have on hand. Store them in an airtight container and voila! Lunches made easy.

TIP: I make sure our pantry is stocked with quinoa, brown rice and millet.

3. Wraps

One way to make your leftovers feel fresh and exciting is to dress them up in a whole grain or lettuce wrap. Leftover chicken? Veggies? Even a dish like veggie curry can feel brand new when you repurpose it in a wrap and add a few new toppings and maybe even some condiments.

TIP: I like to keep my favourite brand of wraps on hand. Unless I know I'll be using them straight away, I'll freeze them and take them out as needed. I also like keeping romaine hearts in our fridge - they can double as a lettuce wrap and salad greens.



4. Salad

What's fresher than a salad?! Take your leftovers, whether it's veggies or protein or both and add some greens to the mix. Top it all off with a delicious dressing (that you can make in advance) and boom! Another fresh and exciting way to make your leftovers feel new. **Continued on the top right column...**

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Make a vinaigrette and/or creamy dressing ahead of time that you can store for up to a week in a mason jar, refrigerated. It'll go a long way in repurposing your leftovers - over top grains, salad and as a dressing for your wraps.

TIP: I always have a variety of greens on our grocery list. Depending on what I'm making, I'll buy mixed greens, spinach, romaine hearts, kale, etc.

5. Vary Your Protein

Adding a new protein to your leftovers can help it feel fresh and exciting.

I like to keep a variety of the following on hand:

canned beans/lentils;

raw nuts/seeds;

nut/seed butters (for dressings);

sprouted tofu/tempeh;

organic free-range eggs;

organic grass-fed beef;

organic pasture-raised chicken.

For example, maybe you have some veggies and chicken left over - add some black beans, raw organic cheddar and now you have the makings of a Tex-Mex inspired meal.

Roasted veggies left over? Add some grilled sprouted and organic tofu and enjoy it over a bowl of grains. OR whip up some scrambled eggs to accompany your veggies or create a quick veggie omelet. The possibilities are endless!

TIP: Stock your pantry with canned lentils/beans.

It's possible to make your leftovers feel fresh and exciting with some planning, a little creativity and a strategically stocked fridge/pantry.



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- Take a bath. Add your favorite essential oils or Epsom salts to help reduce tension in your body.

Diet

- Cut the crap. Avoid refined/processed foods. Most contain added sugar, salt and preservatives that don't benefit you.
- Heart healthy foods
 - Essential fatty Acids Omega 3 - Salmon or other cold-water fatty fish such as mackerel and sardines.
 - Ground flax seeds or oil, Chia, Hemp or Pumpkin seeds and Walnuts
 - Avocado - as a stand-alone, added to a salad or smoothie or as a cooking oil
 - Fibre-rich foods - beans, legumes, fruit and vegetables
 - Phytonutrient rich - dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, collard, bok choy, broccoli, Swiss chard and romaine). Red, orange and yellow vegetables/fruit (peppers, tomatoes, carrots, squash, melons, citrus and berries) garlic, onion, chives and leeks.
 - Antioxidant rich foods high in carotenoids, lycopene and vitamin C will keep those arteries clear of plaques, reduce inflammation and aid in detoxification support. These foods include berries, herbs and spices and teas. Blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, goji berries, pecans, artichokes, kidney beans and cilantro are all foods extremely high in antioxidants.



Lifestyle

- Quit smoking
- Consume alcohol in moderation
- Surround yourself with positive people
- Reduce mental environmental clutter

Heart Healthy Meal Plan

- Stay well hydrated throughout the day.
- Breakfast: Start each day with 6-8 oz glass of water with ½ squeezed lemon or 1 oz. of organic apple cider vinegar.
- Lunch: Try to avoid heavy to digest lunches. They can drain your energy and tempt you to go for sugar or caffeine.
- Dinner: Eat at least 3 hours before bedtime.
- Non-caffeinated teas such as peppermint, chamomile and ginger are great to have post dinner.
- Snacks: Veggie sticks, seed crackers, smoothies, nuts

Breakfast: Cup of green tea, cooked oatmeal with cinnamon & pure maple syrup or honey for added sweetness

Lunch: Spinach salad with chopped walnuts, chopped apple and shredded carrot

Dinner: Baked salmon with steamed vegetables such as broccoli or asparagus sprinkled with olive oil and sesame seeds

Snack: Carrot and celery sticks with hummus

[Read entire article.](#)

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