



Healthful Advice from our Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist, Debra Heverling, MA, RD/LDN

Dietitian's Dish

Healthier Sweets for your Heart!

Whether you're showing your sweetheart some love or just enjoying some "sweet" heart protection, eating more fruits and vegetables reduces risks for heart disease. A variety of preliminary research is identifying berries as an essential fruit group in a heart-healthy diet. They're high in fiber, Vitamin C, antioxidants, and polyphenols. These nutrients tend to benefit heart health because they help lower blood pressure and cholesterol, plus reduce oxidative stress.



Watermelon even has a nutrient profile earning it the American Heart Association's Heart Check Mark.

Along with many heart-protective nutrients, it contains magnesium (which steadies heartbeat) and phosphorus (which has a role in the heart's electrical activity). Create some fun with fruit and enjoy a sweet way to love your heart!



Cheesecake Stuffed Strawberries

Ingredients:

- 2 pints strawberries
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) Neufchatel cream cheese
- 1/2 cup confectioner's sugar
- 15-6 vanilla wafer cookies (~3 Tbsp. crumbs)

Directions:

1. Prepare the strawberries by washing them and cutting off the stemmed tops. Use a paring knife to core out the center of the strawberries and then set the berries aside.*
2. In a medium bowl, using a mixer, beat the cream cheese and powdered sugar until fully combined and creamy, about 3-5 minutes.
3. Spoon the cream cheese mixture into a piping bag with a tip or a zippered freezer bag with bottom corner snipped off.
4. Pipe the cream cheese mixture into the center of the strawberries until it is filled and poking out the top.*
5. Sprinkle the tops of the strawberries with vanilla wafer crumbs and then serve.

*OPTIONAL: To simplify assembly you can also cut strawberries in half and top with small spoonful of the filling.

Other simple variations on this sweet treat are cheesecake stuffed raspberries or blackberries.

Other than rinsing the berries, there's no additional prep required to swap these juicy jewels in place of some of the strawberries!

