

February 2026

Wellness NEWSLETTER



NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH

Cancer Prevention Doesn't Have to Be Complicated

When people think about cancer prevention, they often picture major lifestyle overhauls. The reality is much more encouraging. Prevention is built on small, everyday habits that work better together than alone, and none of them require perfection.

What the Research Tells Us

According to a large study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), people who consistently practiced a combination of healthy behaviors had stronger cancer-prevention outcomes:

- Staying physically active
- Eating a balanced, nutrient-rich diet
- Maintaining a healthy body weight
- Limiting alcohol intake

Rather than focusing on one habit at a time, these behaviors are most effective when they happen together.

Screenings Matter Too

Lifestyle habits are powerful, but they're only part of the picture. Keeping up with recommended preventive exams and screenings helps catch potential issues early, often before symptoms appear. Think of screenings as a routine check-in that supports everything you're doing for your health.

Support Makes It Easier

Not sure where to start? A health coach or wellness professional can really help. Talking through screening results, daily habits, or stress levels with someone trained to guide behavior change can turn good intentions into realistic action steps without feeling overwhelming.

Cancer prevention isn't about doing everything perfectly. It's about stacking small, doable choices: taking a walk, scheduling a screening, or having a supportive conversation about your health. When prevention feels approachable and supported, it's much more likely to stick.

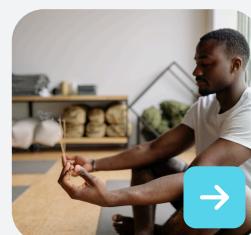
Source: [Social Determinants of Health and Cancer Prevention Guideline Behaviors, 2025](#)



2 LIVESIMPLY: STRENGTHENING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Strong Connections, Healthier Hearts

Supportive relationships help reduce stress and support heart health in simple, everyday ways.



3 UNDERSTANDING THE HEART-BRAIN CONNECTION

Stress, Relationships, and Emotional Health

Stress, emotions, and relationships shape how the brain and heart support long-term health together.



4 Featured Recipe

 **CONNECTEDNESS**

HEALTH TIP CORNER



LiveSimply: Strengthening Social Connections for Heart-Healthy Living

When we think about heart health, we usually focus on exercise, nutrition, and stress management. But there's another powerful factor that often gets overlooked: our social connections. The relationships we maintain with family, partners, and friends can play an important role in supporting long-term heart health.

Why Connection Matters

Strong social connections help protect heart health by:

- Reducing chronic stress, which is closely linked to heart disease
- Supporting emotional wellbeing and a more balanced nervous system
- Encouraging healthier daily habits through shared routines and accountability

Simple Ways to Strengthen Connections

It's not about having the largest social circle. Consistent, meaningful interactions tend to matter more than the number of people you know.

Strengthen your social connections by trying one of the below:

- Schedule a weekly call or coffee with someone you care about
- Invite a friend or family member to join you for a walk
- Make time for shared meals or low-key check-ins

Heart health isn't just about what you eat or how you move. Who you connect with matters too—and small, simple moments of connection can make a lasting difference.

Source: [Influence of the Source of Social Support and Size of Social Network on All-Cause Mortality, 2015](#)

UNDERSTANDING HEART-BRAIN CONNECTION

Stress, Relationships, and Emotional Health

Heart health and brain health are more connected than we often realize. How we feel, how we respond to stress, and how supported we are by others all influence how our bodies function over time.

Stress and the Heart

Chronic stress doesn't just affect mood, it can have real physical effects. Research linking stress-related conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to cardiovascular disease suggests that long-term emotional strain may influence heart health through changes in brain function, inflammation, and stress hormone regulation. When stress remains elevated for long periods, the heart often carries part of that burden.

Emotional Wellbeing and the Brain

Emotional wellbeing plays an important role in brain health, especially as we age. Emerging research in brain aging and Alzheimer's disease highlights emotional health as more than just a "nice to have." Emotional balance, resilience, and healthy coping skills may help support brain function over time and influence behaviors that protect overall health.

The Power of Social Connection

Social relationships help connect the dots between emotional health and physical wellbeing. Supportive relationships with partners, family, and friends can buffer stress, improve emotional resilience, and encourage healthier daily habits. Feeling supported helps the brain manage stress more effectively, which in turn benefits heart health.

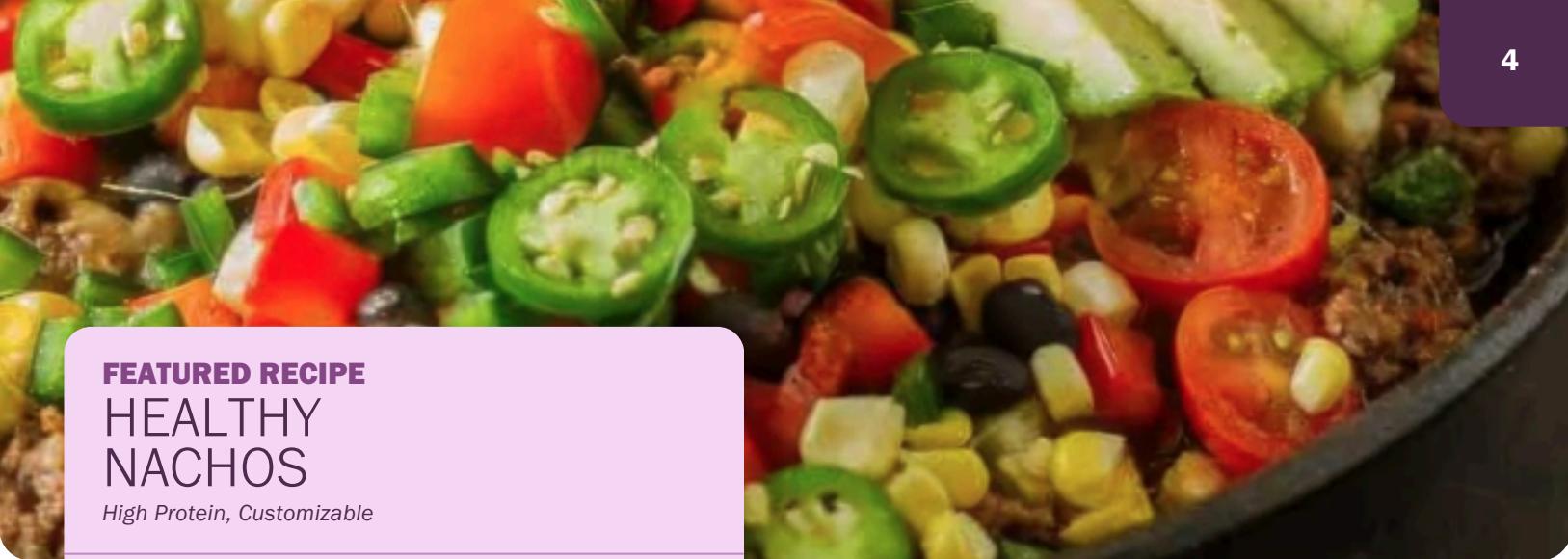
Caring for your heart doesn't always start with diet plans or workout routines. Managing stress, nurturing emotional wellbeing, and staying connected to others are powerful, human ways to support both brain and heart health—one conversation, one calming moment, and one supportive relationship at a time.

Sources:

[Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Cardiovascular Disease State of the Science, Knowledge Gaps, and Research Opportunities, 2025](#)

[Cross-Species Framework for Emotional Well-Being and Brain Aging Lessons From Behavioral Neuroscience, 2025](#)





FEATURED RECIPE

HEALTHY NACHOS

High Protein, Customizable

8 SERVINGS | 50 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground beef, chicken, or turkey
- 1 15 oz jar of your favorite salsa
- ½ cup cottage cheese (optional)
- ¼ cup shredded Mexican-blend cheese
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 poblano pepper, chopped
- 2 ears fresh corn, kernels removed
- 1 serrano pepper, sliced
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 avocado, sliced or chopped
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- Tortilla chips or Belgian endive, for scooping

HEALTHY TIPS

- **Choose lean protein:** Use ground turkey, chicken, or lean ground beef. You can also try shredded rotisserie chicken for convenience or plant-based proteins like lentils or tofu.
- **Boost the veggies:** Go beyond just tomatoes and lettuce. Add colorful bell peppers, corn, poblano or jalapeño peppers, red onions, cherry tomatoes, and fresh herbs like cilantro. The more variety, the more flavor (and nutrients).
- **Use flavorful cheese in moderation:** A little goes a long way! Choose stronger-flavored cheeses like sharp cheddar or pepper jack so you can use less without sacrificing flavor. Grate it yourself for better melting.
- **Make your own chips:** Cut corn or low-carb tortillas into triangles, brush lightly with olive oil, sprinkle with salt, and bake until crispy. It's easy and healthier than store-bought!
- **Try low-carb or veggie chip alternatives:** Use Belgian endive leaves, roasted zucchini rounds, sweet potato slices, or even cauliflower florets as your base, and skip the chips altogether.

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook the ground beef, turkey, or chicken in a medium cast-iron pan until no pink remains. Drain off any fat. Stir in ¾ cup of the salsa and the cottage cheese (if using). Season with salt to taste.
2. Top with the remaining ingredients. Serve with tortilla chips or Belgian endive for scooping. (Alternatively, you can place tortilla chips on a platter and top with the other ingredients.)

NUTRITION

Per Serving:
Calories: 382
Carbohydrates: 25g
Saturated Fat: 6g
Total Sugars: 5g

Per Serving:
Protein: 30g
Fiber: 8g
Sodium: 750 mg

Source: <https://www.thewickednoodle.com/healthy-nachos/>