

Feed Your Heart

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Image: Jessica Acevedo

February includes both Heart Health Day and Valentine's Day, so while celebrating with heart decorations and sweets, consider celebrating your own heart by feeding it well.

Food is one of the most important aspects of heart health. Food gives the heart energy to push blood through the body, and what food you eat matters a lot. Today, most people are not getting enough nutrients.

“Doesn't matter if you're obese or not, most people are walking around here deficient because they're not consuming enough micronutrients because they're not getting the diverse array of plant-specific foods,” says Taneka Douglas, a cellular nutritionist and professor at Kennedy King.

The most popular advice given to patients by doctors and dieticians is to eat more vegetables; however, that is not quite all that Professor Douglas believes.

“Balancing out your diet with your carbs, your fats, your proteins, your vitamins, your minerals, and your water is key. It's easier said than done, but it is key. What that balance looks like is individualized,” explains Professor Douglas.

Lately, everyone suffers from more allergies and food sensitivities, which has made creating a balanced meal more individualized than ever before. Concerning the various individualized meal balances between person to person, Professor Douglas does not believe in recommending specific vegetables or fruits.

“Diversity is key, and tasting the rainbow. I can't really say, tell you to eat pineapple because you might not be able to eat pineapple, but I can tell you to eat things in that family or the color coding of that because the vitamins and minerals that are in that you'll find in other fruits and vegetables of that sort,” states Professor Douglas.

The lack of accessibility to affordable fresh foods and resources that provide nutritional density prevents people from eating healthier. HWC students should consider visiting the Healthy Market in the lower level of the building for free food. The Market's spring schedule is Monday

and Wednesday 9am to 5pm. It is also open on Fridays from 9am to 1pm. A healthy diet does not have to be expensive.

You are stuck with your heart your entire life so do not be afraid to taste the rainbow. Play around with your food.

Professor Douglas recommends making shakes and juices for every occasion. Consider celebrating a belated Valentine's Day by making pink and red shakes. Try adding red vegetables for extra nutrients.

It will look great and taste even better.