

TO MEDIA:

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**EXCELA HEALTH'S STIRRING UP WELLNESS PROGRAM
ENCOURAGES PARTICIPANTS TO BE HEART HEALTHY**

MOUNT PLEASANT, PA, FEBRUARY 1, 2010 ... February is "Heart Month," a time to reflect on how eating habits impact cardiac health. The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends a diet that is low in fat, saturated fat, sodium and cholesterol. "Heart healthy eating isn't about what foods to avoid, but rather, what foods to choose," said Dawn Davoli, RD, nutrition consultant for Excelsa Health's Golden Hour cardiovascular education program.

The following is a list of so-called "super-foods" that help fight off heart disease, yet offer good taste. Try adding a few of these nutrient packed foods to your next meal.

- **CARROTS:** The carotenoids in this colorful vegetable have been shown to help protect against heart disease. Other benefits include vitamin A, vitamin C and fiber. The sugar content in carrots makes them tasty in muffins and cakes.
- **OATS:** A good source of soluble fiber, this food has been shown to decrease total cholesterol and LDL, or "bad" cholesterol in the blood. It is also high in magnesium, potassium and zinc. "No wonder the white-haired Quaker is smiling on the oatmeal canisters!" said Davoli.
- **SALMON:** The omega-3 fatty acids in salmon and other fatty fish, such as tuna and sardines may reduce triglyceride levels and slightly lower blood

pressure. Salmon also contains vitamin B6, B12, vitamin D, phosphorus, potassium and selenium. The AHA recommends most adults consume 6-16 ounces of fatty fish per week.

- **BLACK BEANS:** These legumes contain healthy amounts of vitamin B, protein, iron, folate, copper, potassium and zinc and have been shown to lower cholesterol and blood pressure. Using black beans as a protein source in “meatless meals” helps reduce the amount of saturated fat consumed from animal sources. Davoli suggests trying them in stews, soups and salads.
- **BERRIES:** This includes blueberries, blackberries, raspberries and boysenberries. They contain healthy amounts of vitamin C, folate, fiber and antioxidants, which may help regulate blood pressure and boost good cholesterol, also known as HDL. Remember, frozen berries are just as nutritious as fresh.

To learn more about heart healthy living, join Davoli for “Stirring Up Wellness,” 10:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, February 27, Excelsa Health Frick Hospital. The topic is Cardiovascular Health – a Nutrition and Healthy Cooking Workshop. During this fun-filled educational event, participants will learn how to stock their pantry for good cardiovascular health, and sample several of the “super foods” in featured recipes. Davoli also will address heart attack and stroke awareness, risk factors and prevention.

Pre-registration is required by February 25. Call the Excelsa Health Call Center, toll free, 1-877-771-1234, or visit www.excelahealth.org.