

Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

CENTER LOCATION

FEBRUARY 2026

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Hours of Operation:
Monday—Friday 8-5pm

Sponsorship

Funding for this newsletter is provided by
Sandoval County Commission and
Non Metro New Mexico
Economic Development District
Area Agency on Aging

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All Sites individualize their newsletters to their local area information, activities calendars and games.

Health & Wellness



Take Action for Your Heart

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, but it can often be prevented. Adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle can help you reduce the risk of heart disease and its risk factors. Take action to protect your heart by following these tips.

Get Enough Quality Sleep - Lack of sleep or getting poor-quality sleep increases the risk of having high blood pressure, heart disease, and other medical conditions.

- Try to aim for 7-9 hours of sleep a night
- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day
- Exercise regularly, but not within 2-3 hours before bedtime
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine

Eat Better - A flexible and balanced eating plan can help lower your high blood pressure and improve your cholesterol.

- Follow the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan, which can help you create a heart healthy eating style for life
- Read nutrition labels to pick the food lowest in saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars
- Try a mix of lean cuts of meat, eat fish once or twice a week, and eat two or more meatless meals each week
- Consider whole fruits, dried fruits, unsalted rice cakes, fat-free and low-fat yogurt, or raw vegetables as a snack

Maintain a Healthy Weight - Maintaining a healthy weight is important for overall health and can help you prevent and control many diseases and conditions

- Choose healthy snacks like fruits, vegetables, yogurt, or nuts, instead of sugary or high-calorie snacks
- Stay hydrated with water as your primary beverage
- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise (such as brisk walking) or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity (like running) exercise per week
- Consider keeping a log of what you eat throughout the day

Be More Active - Getting enough physical activity helps to lower your risk of heart disease and stroke

- Adults should spend at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) each week doing physical activity

Health & Wellness continued

- Sit less! Take the stairs, Park farther away, March in place or take a walk around the block
- Try muscle strengthening activities like lifting weights, working with resistance bands, doing sit-ups and push-ups, or some forms of yoga - whatever works for you
- If you don't have a lot of time in your day, try being active for 10 minutes at a time. Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts!

Manage Stress - Learning how to manage stress with healthy coping strategies helps improve your emotional and physical health

- Use relaxation techniques that combine breathing and focused attention on pleasing thoughts and images to calm and mind and body
- Consider meditation, as it can help to lower stress
- Take a yoga class to help lower stress and improve mindfulness. It may also off you a supportive community

Practice Self - Care & Find Social Support - Daily acts of self-care can benefit your heart because self care is heart care. Studies show that having positive social support, cose relationships, and feeling connected to others makes it easier to stick to heart healthy habits

- Try to do at least one positive action for your heart health each day
- Make the docto's appointment you've been putting off
- Ask family and friend to text you reminders or encouragement to help you meet your health goals
- Join an exercise class or weight management group to connect with other like minded people and stay motivated

Control Blood Pressure - Keep your blood pressure in a healthy range and keep track of your numbers. Blood pressure that's consistently higher than 130/80 mm Hg can cause serious health problems

- Have your blood pressure checked each time you visit the doctor
- Use a blood pressure monitor to measure your blood pressure at thome and learn how to measure it correctly
- Use a blood pressure tracker to keep a record of your numbers each reading

For more information about how you can take
action to keep your heart healthy,
visit hearttruth.gov



Nutrition

Here are 7 things a cardiovascular dietitian eats and what they avoid for heart health

1. Get plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Eat: My favorite are blueberries because they're a great snack, either fresh or frozen. I also love how easy spinach is to use. You can use fresh spinach as a salad or quickly sauté with garlic and onions. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables is associated with a reduced risk of heart disease. Dried, fresh, frozen, or low sodium canned fruits and veggies all work.

Avoid: I avoid canned fruit in heavy syrup and any foods with high fructose corn syrup.

2. Choose foods made with mostly whole grains rather than refined grains.

Eat: My favorite grains to eat are quick oats and quinoa. Both are whole grain and easy to cook.

Avoid: I stay away from foods containing processed white flour because there are fewer nutrients and no fiber.

3. Choose healthy sources of protein.

Eat: There are some great options that are my go-to in this category.

Plant protein: I love to eat a serving of nuts daily. Walnuts and almonds are known for their omega 3 fatty acids. A quarter cup of nuts makes a great snack. Eating more nuts was associated with lower risk of heart disease, coronary heart disease, and stroke. Lentils are high in fiber, high in protein, easy to cook, and may cause less gastrointestinal (GI) discomfort than beans. A higher intake of legumes (beans and peas) is linked to lower heart disease risk.

Fish and seafood: My favorites are salmon or seared ahi tuna because they are high in protein, have fewer calories and contain healthy heart Omega 3 fatty acids.

Low-fat or fat-free dairy products: My favorite is non-fat Greek yogurt because of its versatility. It's high in protein, has a lot of calcium, and can replace sour cream in many recipes. It's a great breakfast option, stirred with quick oats and berries.

Lean cuts of meat and poultry: There is a direct association between eating red meat and the risk of heart disease and death. That relationship is even stronger for processed meat such as bacon or hot dogs. Instead of processed meats, I often choose skinless chicken thighs. It's leaner than most beef, affordable and has more flavor than chicken breast, which I get tired of.

Nutrition continued

Avoid: I avoid processed meats. What's in it? It's a mystery! I also steer clear of full-fat dairy products.

4. Use liquid plant oils.

Eat: My favorite is avocado oil, which has a high smoke point at 520 degrees. I like to bake with walnut oil for added flavor. Liquid plant oils are rich in unsaturated fats, which reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and heart disease risk. These include oils from peanuts, most tree nuts, and flax seeds.

Avoid: I stay away from fats that are hard at room temperature, such as bacon grease, shortening and margarine. I also avoid tropical oils (coconut, palm, and palm kernel), animal fats (butter and lard), and partially hydrogenated fats. Occasionally, I use small amounts of coconut oil or butter to flavor specific recipes.

5. Limit drinking beverages and eating foods with added sugars.

Eat: I love using maple syrup in my coffee and oatmeal. I also sweeten with small amounts of local honey.

Avoid: I avoid any chemically based sweeteners and processed white sugar. Added sugars are associated with increased risk of type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and being overweight. Alternative sweeteners have shown mixed effects on metabolism.

6. Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt.

Eat: I use dried herb blends, fresh herbs, and citrus to elevate the natural taste of foods.

Avoid: I avoid salt (sodium) as much as I can. There is a direct relationship between increased salt intake and high blood pressure. In the U.S., the top sources of salt are packaged and processed foods, and foods prepared outside the home.

7. Limit your alcohol intake.

Drink: Water with a splash of lemon or cucumber is a great option for some added flavor.

Avoid: If you don't drink alcohol, don't start. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit your intake. The risk of atrial fibrillation (A-fib) and of stroke increases with increased alcohol intake. Stroke and coronary heart disease are lowest in those who drink 1-2 alcoholic beverages daily. The American Heart Association does not recommend starting to drink more alcohol to improve heart disease health.

Staying Active



Exercise and the Heart

Exercise has many positive effects on heart health. A regular exercise routine can help:

- Lower blood pressure
- Lessen risk of developing diabetes
- Maintain healthy body weight
- Reduce inflammation throughout the body

Experts say one of the key benefits of exercise is that it helps to control or modify many of the risk factors for heart disease. Smoking is another big factor for heart disease, and research indicates people who exercise regularly are unlikely to take on or continue a bad habit such as smoking.

Exercise also:

- Improves the muscles' ability to pull oxygen out of the blood, reducing the need for the heart to pump more blood to the muscles
- Reduces stress hormones that can put an extra burden on the heart
- Works like a beta blocker to slow the heart rate and lower blood pressure
- Increases high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and helps control triglycerides

A number of studies have also shown that people who exercise regularly are less likely to suffer a sudden heart attack or other life-threatening cardiac event.

While exercise has benefits in and of itself, the best way to prevent heart disease is to combine exercise with a healthy diet. Exercise alone can help with weight loss over a long period of time. But a short-term approach is to reduce the number of calories you take in through diet, while increasing the calories you use through exercise.

Ideal Exercise for the Heart:

The best exercise has a positive effect on the heart and improves the musculoskeletal system.

The American Heart Association and the American College of Sports Medicine both recommend combining aerobic exercise (jogging, swimming, biking) with resistance training (moderate weightlifting). Together, these two categories of exercise produce the greatest benefit for preventing and managing heart disease.

Staying Active continued

Sources for Exercise Intelligence

The National Institute of Health, the American Heart Association, and the American College of Sports Medicine are all good sources for assistance in choosing the right exercise routine.

Johns Hopkins' clinical exercise center offers medically supervised programs and exercise guidelines based on scientific evidence. They evaluate fitness levels and consider medical history before starting people on exercise regimens. There are similar medical fitness centers throughout the country.

How Much Exercise and How Often?

General guidelines call for a combination of aerobic exercise and resistance training.

Try to get in a minimum of 30 minutes of aerobic exercise such as walking, cycling or swimming at least five days a week. Do moderate weightlifting to tone muscles and build muscle endurance twice a week, or frequently enough to cover the major muscle groups.

How do you know when you're making progress?

There are many ways to chart your exercise progress. Three of the most common are target heart rate for aerobic exercise, number of repetitions for weight training, and fat vs. muscle body composition.

Target heart rate – The more fit you are, the harder you'll need to work to reach your target heart rate. For example, in the first month you may need to walk 3 mph to reach a heart rate of 120, while in the second month in order to reach the same heart rate, you need to walk 4 mph or find a steeper hill. Your fitness is improved and your heart is working more efficiently.

Reps – The more weight you can lift 12-15 times without straining, the stronger and more durable your muscles are. For example, you start out struggling to curl a 15-lb. dumbbell 15 times, and then add three to five pounds when it becomes easy.

Body composition – Exercise more and your body will change shape: you'll lose fat, specifically around the waist, and gain muscle. A looser pair of pants or skirt is a distinct sign of progress.

Know when you're overdoing it

Setting a target heart rate with a qualified trainer or health professional is the simplest way to keep your workout within a healthy range.

Stay within your target heart rate, and you're working out at the right level.

Staying Active continued

Go above your target heart rate, and you're probably working too hard.

Stay below your target, and you're not working hard enough to gain the most cardiovascular benefit.

An important sign of overwork is fatigue and soreness that stays with you longer than a day or two after you exercise. Any persistent pain could mean you've overused or have injured a muscle.

How to Stick with an Exercise Routine

The key to a successful exercise routine is staying interested and motivated. Here are a few ways to keep exercise a lifelong habit:

Set aside a specific amount of time each day for exercise and work it into your schedule.

Work out with a friend or join a gym and work out in a group. Either scenario creates mutual support and healthy competition to keep things interesting.

Keep a simple log to chart your progress.

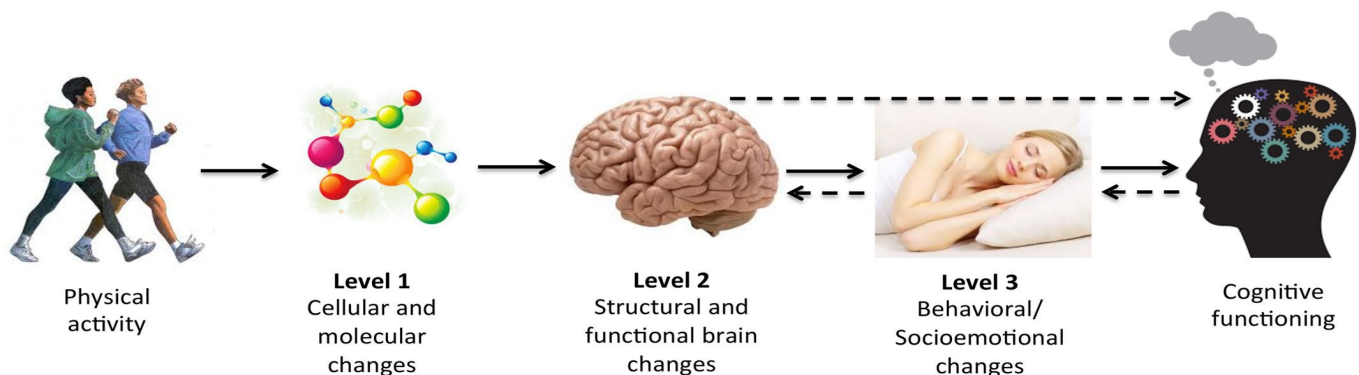
Create your own record or graph on a spreadsheet or use one of the many programs available on the internet.

If you jog or cycle, use a heart rate meter or speedometer to help you set and reach goals.

Use exercise to tune up your cardiovascular health

When researchers test a person's initial fitness and then again three to six months later, they see progress. The subjects' oxygen consumption will be higher. Their time on the treadmill will be longer. Their heart rate and blood pressure will be lower.

Exercise can be like tuning up the engine that is your heart and the body's circulatory system for distributing blood and ensure it's working efficiently.



Volunteer

A huge thank-you to our Advisory Members for your participation, your energy, and your commitment in helping to reestablish our first council meeting of 2026.

We're excited to continue building this together, and **we'd truly love to have even more of you join us**. If you're interested in being part of the council, sharing your insights, celebrating our community's achievements, staying updated, and being a strong voice for your volunteer station, please reach out to the Senior Volunteer Programs at **505-404-5818**.

Please help spread the word about our pantry schedules:

- **Bernalillo Pantry:** Every **1st Wednesday** of the month
801 Rotary Park, Bernalillo NM 87004
- **Pena Blanca Pantry:** Every **2nd Thursday** of the month
778 Highway 22, Pena Blanca NM 87041

Happy Birthday

Joyce Burlone
Katherine Crespín
Bette Davis
Paula Ehmer
Margaret Garcia
Joseph Grainey
Mary Lou Hedrick
I-Hsiang Ko
Diego Martinez
Cynthia Merriman
Maureen Moyén
Genoveva Pereyra



Jean Potabi
Karen Rains
Karen Reinhold
Kristina Rubi
Bradley Schab
Terry Schrum
JoAnn Scott
Linda Socha
Jean Stevenson
Sheryl Vogel
Nancy Jean Whitten
Jane Zawkiewicz



WORD SEARCH

W	E	T	A	R	B	E	L	E	C	M	T	D	M	T
O	F	O	U	R	T	E	E	N	T	H	I	I	A	I
Y	O	L	W	U	A	O	R	W	O	J	S	W	I	Y
A	L	A	O	Y	M	T	E	E	W	S	E	C	R	R
D	P	S	U	W	V	S	L	A	I	Y	N	H	O	A
I	F	D	T	R	E	P	P	S	U	H	I	O	L	U
L	L	F	N	S	V	R	F	D	T	R	T	C	P	R
O	C	G	E	C	I	O	S	F	N	F	N	O	F	B
H	A	T	U	X	L	L	L	O	V	E	E	L	L	E
U	O	P	O	M	U	W	A	H	P	X	L	A	C	F
N	I	K	L	Y	V	U	O	J	O	M	A	T	A	G
D	U	L	D	W	L	G	I	F	T	S	V	E	O	H
X	Y	N	K	E	A	J	U	L	I	W	L	S	I	V
M	A	D	I	U	S	X	Y	Z	H	E	A	R	T	S
C	A	C	M	S	D	R	A	C	I	U	S	X	Y	I

See how many of these newspaper related words you can find in the puzzle.
The words can be forward, backward or diagonal.

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. VALENTINES | 5. NOTES | 9. CELEBRATE | 13. CHOCOLATE |
| 2. DAY | 6. LOVE | 10. FEBRUARY | 14. FLOWERS |
| 3. HEARTS | 7. CUPID | 11. FOURTEEN | 15. GIFTS |
| 4. CARDS | 8. HOLIDAY | 12. CANDY | 16. SWEET |

Red Velvet Cheesecake Brownies

These beautiful red velvet cheesecake brownies are moist and delicious with a swirl of decadent cheesecake batter! Perfect for red velvet cake lovers; adds a different twist to the traditional cake. A great dessert for Valentine's Day and can be made ahead.



Prep Time: 20 mins
Cook Time: 30 mins
Additional Time: 30 mins
Total Time: 1 hr 20 mins
Servings: 12
Yield: 1 (8-inch square) pan

Ingredients: Red Velvet Brownies

1 cup white sugar
 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 3/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
 1 ounce red food coloring
 1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar
 2 large eggs, slightly beaten

Cheesecake Filling:

1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese at room temperature
 1/4 cup white sugar
 1 large egg
 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions:

Step 1: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease an 8x8-inch baking pan.

Step 2: For the red velvet brownies: Whisk 1 cup sugar and melted butter in a large mixing bowl; stir in cocoa, red food coloring, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, vinegar, and salt, one at a time, mixing well after each addition to avoid lumps. Mix in 2 eggs until thoroughly combined.

Red Velvet Cheesecake Brownies continued

Step 3: Stir flour into cocoa mixture just until combined; set aside 1/4 cup batter. Pour remaining batter into the prepared baking dish.

Step 4: For the cheesecake filling: Beat cream cheese in a bowl using an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add 1/4 cup sugar, 1 egg, and 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract; continue to beat until well blended and only small lumps remain, 3 to 4 minutes.

Step 5: Spoon cream cheese mixture in dollops over the batter in pan; gently smooth tops of dollops even with batter using a knife or offset spatula. Do not overmix. Drizzle reserved 1/4 cup of batter over the dollops of cream cheese mixture. Drag a knife or skewer through the batter and cream cheese mixture to create swirls.

Step 6: Bake in the preheated oven until top is dry and edges have started to pull away from the sides of the pan, about 30 to 35 minutes. Cool completely before cutting into bars; store covered in refrigerator. Cook's Note The fluffier and smooth you can get the cheesecake mixture, the easier it will be to spread. I think this is best served the next day! 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
Cheesecake Filling: 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese at room temperature 1/4 cup white sugar 1 large egg 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

Nutrition Facts: Per serving: 265 calories; total fat 16g; saturated fat 10g; cholesterol 87mg; sodium 123mg; total carbohydrate 28g; dietary fiber 1g; total sugars 21g; protein 4g; calcium 28mg; iron 1mg; potassium 78mg



Chicken Parmigiana

This chicken parmigiana is a very nice dinner for two. Serve it with your favorite pasta and tossed greens.



Prep Time: 30 mins
Cook Time: 1 hr
Total Time: 1 hr 30 mins

Servings: 2

Ingredients

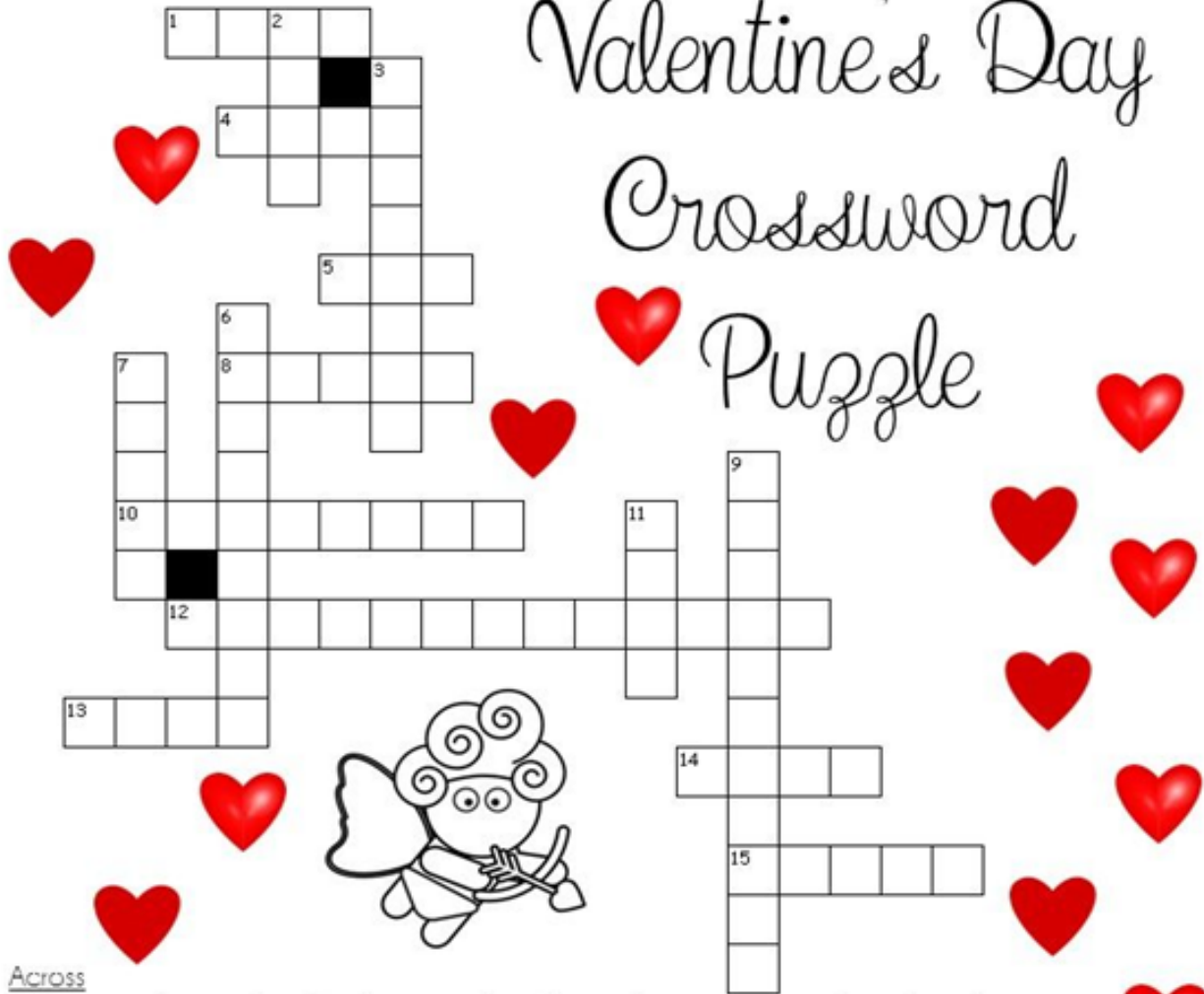
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 ounces dry bread crumbs
- 2 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- $\frac{3}{4}$ (16 ounce) jar spaghetti sauce
- 2 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

1. Gather the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly grease a medium baking sheet.
2. Pour egg into a small shallow bowl. Place bread crumbs in a separate shallow bowl. Dip chicken into egg, then into bread crumbs. Place coated chicken on the prepared baking sheet.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until no longer pink and juices run clear, about 40 minutes. Remove from the oven.
4. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ of the spaghetti sauce into a 7x11-inch baking dish. Place chicken breasts over the sauce, then cover with remaining sauce. Sprinkle mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses on top.
5. Continue baking until heated through and cheeses have melted, about 20 more minutes.

Nutrition Facts: Per serving: 528 calories; total fat 18g; saturated fat 8g; cholesterol 184mg; sodium 1310mg; total carbohydrate 45g; dietary fiber 6g; total sugars 17g; protein 44g; vitamin c 3mg; calcium 445mg; iron 4mg; potassium 804mg

Valentine's Day Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. A genre of writing that often rhymes and can be used to express love through words
4. A type of bird that is often associated with Valentine's Day
5. Gesture of love and an embrace from one person to another
8. The shape that is often red in color and associated as a symbol for Valentine's Day
10. Phrase one person says to another person to show affection
12. Holiday in February that celebrates love and is named after a Saint
13. The four-letter emotion expressed from one person to another
14. A decorated memento expressing a sentiment of love that is exchanged on Valentine's Day
15. A type of red flower that is typically given by the dozen as a gift for Valentine's Day

Down

2. The mythological god of love (also known as Cupid)
3. The month in which Valentine's Day occurs
6. Made from cacao, this candy is brown in color and typically given in a box as a gift on Valentine's Day
7. A small, winged boy who carries a bow and arrow, and is a symbol of Valentine's Day
9. The items Cupid carries and uses to cast love spells
11. Gesture of love from one person's lips to another's cheek or lips

SENIOR DAY

NEW
DATE



FEBRUARY 13, 2026

Join us at the Roundhouse

Join us on February 13th for Senior Day at the Legislature where you can participate in our free resource fair, learn more about New Mexico Aging Services' initiatives, budget requests, and advocate for funding that makes positive impacts in the lives of New Mexicans every day.



RSVP TO ATTEND SENIOR DAY:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/SeniorDayFeb132026

EVENT DETAILS

- 8:30 AM Check-In and Light Refreshments
- 8:30 AM Resource Fair
- 9:00 AM Legislative Tours Around the Roundhouse
- 11:00 AM Speakers
- 12:00 PM Closing

Complimentary T-shirt sponsored by LANL Foundation and tote bag sponsored by AARP New Mexico for the first 300 attendees. Breakfast burritos sponsored by Non Metro New Mexico Area Agency on Aging.

Join a Legislative Tour and connect with your legislator.



FOR GROUP REGISTRATION OR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.AGING.NM.GOV/SENIORDAY