

THE HEART SUPPORT NEWSLETTER



from the Irish Heart Foundation and it's members!

December 2020

Welcome to our second issue

I do hope you are keeping well.

We are nearing Christmas and hopes of being with our families. This year has been one we did not expect. In January we were so looking forward to our years calendar, full of hope of meeting with members in our information & support groups, both old and new. The cups of tea, the meaningful chats, the hugs, the swapping of experiences and advice and suddenly in March, the cancellations began.

We miss meeting you but even though we are not meeting physically, we are here doing our very best to support you. I have spent many an evening chatting to some of you about what Covid 19 has meant for a heart patient – feelings of fear and isolation. I hope you are doing okay. This newsletter is a way of reaching out to you and we hope you find it helpful.

We have been planning and keeping hope alive for a better 2021. We have a new web page specifically for heart failure being launched in January, which has videos, information and details on the new fluid tracker app, which you can find on www.irishheart.ie. Other supports available, include our private Facebook Page – The Heart Support Network, or our monthly zoom meetings which are very similar to our face



Lucinda



and Katie

medications, diet, exercise, mental health etc. with an expert speaker and we get a chance to ask questions. Don't forget, we also have our nurse support line, available to you every weekday morning from 9am until 1p.m. on 01 6685001. If you have any medical questions or indeed if you want to get through to any of our support team just call us.

The heart failure team is made up of many people. We have a wonderful Heart Failure Patient Panel who we have to thank, especially Pauline O'Shea who has pulled this newsletter together. Thank you all for everything you do.

If you need further details on any of the above, or are seeking information on any other matters relating to heart failure, do get in touch by emailing heartfailure@irishheart.ie or phone 01 6685001. For now, we wish you a very peaceful and health filled Christmas. Please know that we are here to do what we can for you the patient and your families even over the holidays.

Lucinda & Katie

Over the page

Coping with stress, advice from Counsellor, Donagh Ward, MIACP

Martin's Christmas Chocolate Terrine



Give your feedback

We welcome your feedback on our newsletter, so if you would like to write us your comments, email heartfailure@irishheart.ie

THE HAPPY HEART SPACE because we all need a smile!

A mechanic was removing a cylinder head from a motor of a Harley motorcycle, when he spotted a well-known heart surgeon in his shop. The surgeon was there waiting for the service manager to come take a look at his bike, when the mechanic shouted across the garage, "Hey, Doc, can I ask you a question?"

The surgeon, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working on the motorcycle. The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked, "So Doc, look at this engine. I open its heart, take valves out, fix'em, put 'em back in, and when I finish, it works just like new. So how come I get such a small salary and you get the really big bucks, when you and I are doing basically the same work?"

Martin's Christmas Chocolate Terrine



Serves 8-10

Ingredients

2oz pitted prunes
2oz dried apricot
1 tbsp candied peel
1 tbsp of each of dried cranberries, cherries and blueberries
7 fl oz freshly made tea (Earl Grey my choice but any tea)
3 tbsp brandy
6oz dark chocolate broken
3 oz unsalted butter
2oz caster sugar
3 eggs (separate)
1oz coco powder
284ml cream (whip or double)
Icing sugar to serve

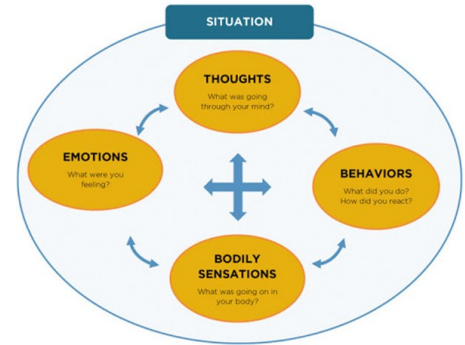
Method:

1: Soak the fruit in the tea and brandy overnight
Drain well and chop
Line a 2lb loaf tin with cling film
Melt the chocolate with half the butter in a bowl over a simmering pan of water
Make sure the bowl is above the water
Take off heat and cool slightly
2: Beat the remaining butter and sugar together until light and fluffy, then gradually add the egg yolks and coco one at a time, beating continuously (add a little coco after each egg) this is to stop the mixture splitting
Fold in the melted chocolate and fruit
3: Whip the cream until it forms soft peaks. Do the same to the egg whites (make sure the bowl for egg whites is clean). Gently stir in the cream then add in egg whites into the chocolate and fruit mixture until evenly combine
4: Pour the mixture into a loaf tin cover with cling film and freeze over night
Take out of freezer and turn out on to a plate 10 mins before serving
Remove the cling film dust with icing sugar, cut into thin slices

Shelley Kearney RIP 1968 -2007
Merry Christmas

Coping with stress

At our last monthly zoom talk, on Nov 12th Counsellor, Donagh Ward, MIACP, spoke to our group on coping with stress. Here are some of the key points his talk covered:



Firstly – what is ‘stress’? You will find a wide array of definitions of stress online and elsewhere. In psychological and emotional terms, stress is what happens when we feel unable to cope with a *perceived* pressure. The important word here is ‘perceived’, as sometimes our perceptions and observations of a pressure or threat can produce emotional, physiological and behavioural reactions which can be worse than the situation/pressure/threat itself.

Healthy stress, can actually be beneficial to you. As opposed to unhealthy stress, healthy stress can help with motivation, focus, protecting oneself and performance. On the other hand, unhealthy stress typically causes worry and anxiety. It also feels physically uncomfortable, and it can lead to more serious issues if not addressed.

Some ways to deal with stress

When we are under pressure, people often comfort eat, exercise less, sleep less, drink more alcohol or smoke. Unfortunately, these responses won’t help one’s stress - or one’s heart. Different things work for different people, but here are some suggested stress-management tips:

Be kind to yourself: Stress is a very normal reaction to the stressors in one’s life. Be compassionate towards yourself – you are not a ‘weak’ person because you experience unhealthy stress.

Lean on the people you trust: If you notice your stress levels increasing persistently, reach out to someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, a co-worker, or a counsellor. Sharing your feelings may help to reduce your stress.

Keep a journal: Set aside time to reflect on your day. Write down any thoughts or feelings you’re having. This can be a useful tool to help you better understand your stressors and how you react to stress.

Eat well-balanced, regular meals: When it comes to managing stress, proper nutrition is your friend. Skipping meals can lower your blood sugar, which can depress your mood. In some cases, this can also trigger intense feelings of anger and frustration. Avoid self-medicating through abusing alcohol/prescription/recreational drugs.

Exercise regularly: Engaging in regular, moderate physical activity can improve your health and reduce your stress levels. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins. These feel-good hormones can also ease symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Get plenty of rest: Your ability to manage stress decreases when you’re tired. Try to get a recommended seven to nine hours each night.

Practice relaxation exercises