

# The Edible Editorial

February 2026

## Healthy Hearts, Happy Plates

February is all about **heart health**, **kindness**, and keeping meals cozy during winter. This month is a great time to focus on balanced nutrition, simple food activities, and reminding children that taking care of our bodies is an everyday habit.

### February Nutrition Focus: Heart-Healthy Habits

Heart health starts early. Teaching children healthy eating habits now helps set the foundation for lifelong wellness.

#### Heart-healthy foods to include:

- Fruits and vegetables (especially red ones like apples, strawberries, and tomatoes)
- Whole grains such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, and brown rice
- Lean proteins like beans, eggs, yogurt, chicken, and fish

Low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt

#### Provider Tip:

Talk with children about how food helps their hearts stay strong. Keep it simple. “These foods help your heart work hard so you can run and play.”

### Creditable February Meal Ideas

All ideas below meet CACFP meal-pattern requirements when properly portioned.

#### Breakfast

- Oatmeal with diced apples and milk
- Whole-grain toast with sunflower seed butter, fruit and milk
- Yogurt parfait with berries, whole-grain cereal and milk

#### Lunch / Supper

- Baked chicken, brown rice, steamed broccoli, apples and milk
- Turkey and cheese sandwich on whole-grain bread, carrot sticks, peaches and milk
- Bean and cheese quesadilla on whole-grain tortilla with corn and milk

#### Snack

- Apple slices with yogurt dip
- Whole-grain crackers with cheese
- Banana halves and milk

### Valentine's Day Without the Sugar Overload

Valentine's Day can still be fun without candy taking over.

#### Non-food celebration ideas:

- Heart-shaped crafts
- Valentine card exchanges
- Dance party or movement games

#### If serving food:

Stick to your normal meal pattern. Strawberries, red apples, yogurt, and whole-grain items fit the theme without added sugar.

### February Food & Learning Activity

#### “Build a Healthy Heart” Plate

Have children create a paper plate meal using drawings or magazine cutouts:

- ½ plate fruits and vegetables
- ¼ plate grains
- ¼ plate protein

Talk about how each food group helps the body.

## Claim Summary and Errors Report

Each time your monthly claim is processed, a “Claim Summary and Errors Report” is generated. This report serves a variety of purposes including: the month for which you are receiving payment, the breakdown of the number of meals and snacks and how they were paid, and any errors on your claim that resulted in lack of reimbursement. This report also includes a list of children whose enrollments are due to expire. To guarantee your highest reimbursement, **it is extremely important that you read this report each and every month.** By reading it monthly, you will have the opportunity to:

- correct future errors that may otherwise result in loss of reimbursement.
- renew child enrollments that—if expired—will result in loss of reimbursement. (It is *your* responsibility to assure that updates are sent to our office before they expire. If emailing to the office we will respond with a received or thank you when we get the form.)

When in Kid Kare...

- Click on “Food Program” on the left side of the screen.
- Click on “View Claims”.
- Select the specific claim month.
- Click the button “Print Claim Summary”.

If you send in a *paper* claim each month, the Claim Summary and Errors Report is mailed to you when your claim has been paid. Any errors on the claim will be printed at the bottom of your check stub. Please review this each month to correct future errors, and submit missing/expired Child Registration Letters.



# Beef Vegetable Soup - Recipe for Centers

**CACFP Crediting Information:** 1 cup (8 oz. ladle) = 1/2 cup vegetable and 2 oz. meat/  
meat alternate. Makes 25 servings.

## Ingredients:

3 lbs. 4 oz. Raw ground beef (no more than 10% fat)  
2 qt. Low-sodium beef broth  
1 qt. 2 cups (approx. 1/2 No. 10 can) Canned no-salt added diced tomatoes, undrained.  
1 1/2 cups Fresh celery, chopped  
1 3/4 cups Fresh onions, chopped  
2 tsp. Salt  
1/2 tsp. Ground black or white pepper  
1 Tbsp. Onion powder  
1 Tbsp. Salt-free seasoning  
3 Tbsp. Garlic powder  
1/8 cup Dried parsley  
3 Tbsp. Ancho chili powder  
2 cups. Frozen corn  
1 lb. 3 oz. Frozen peas and carrots  
2 cups. Frozen green beans

## Directions:

1. Place ground beef in a large stock pot. Heat over medium high heat uncovered for 5-8 minutes. Stir often until meat is well done.
2. Remove meat from heat. Drain in a colander.
3. Return to heat.
4. Add beef broth, tomatoes, celery, onions, salt, pepper, onion powder, salt-free seasoning, garlic powder, parsley and ancho chili powder to stock pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and cover. Simmer for 20 minutes.
5. Add corn, peas and carrots, and green beans.
6. Cover and simmer over medium high heat for 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
7. Serve 1 cup (portion with 8 oz. ladle).



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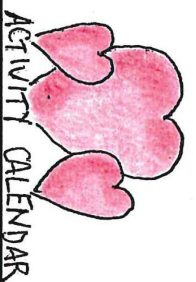
To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
  2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- email:** [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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# February



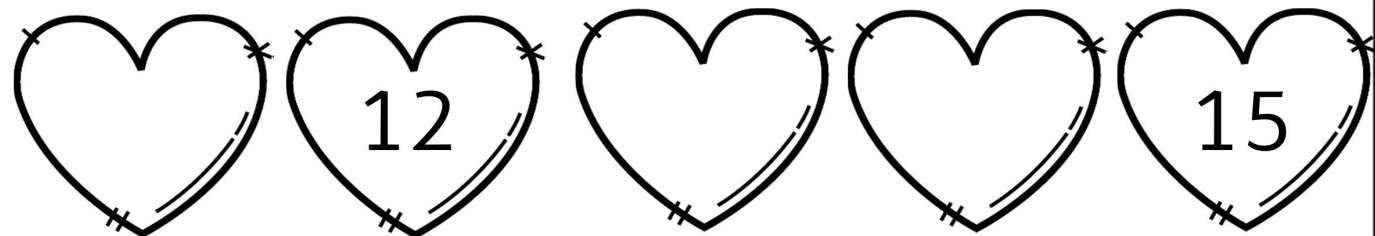
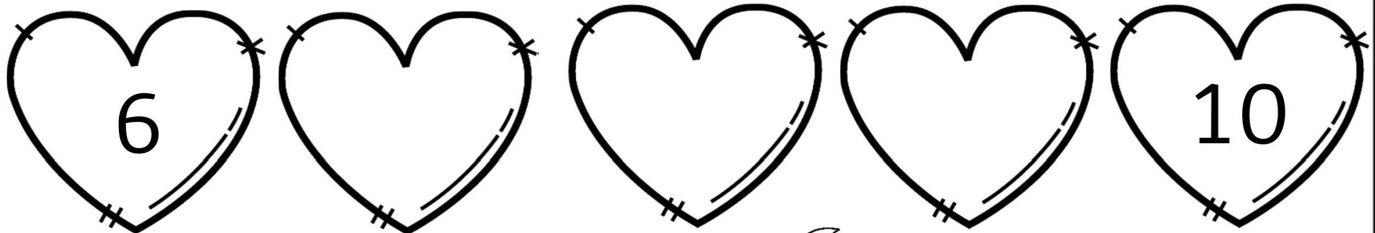
| Sunday  | Monday   | Tuesday  | Wednesday   | Thursday   | Friday   | Saturday  |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| <p>1  beer - beer</p> <p>Check the batteries in your smoke alarms</p> <p>match family socks, and put them away</p> <p>15 play a game with the whole FAMILY</p> <p>22 make trail mix: raisins, peanuts, cereal</p> <p>take a hike!</p> | <p>2  shadows</p> <p>Groundhog DAY!</p> <p>scare me</p> <p>9 sort coins... dimes, nickels, pennies</p> <p>...Name and count</p> <p>16 PRESIDENT'S DAY</p> <p>Hi Abe Hello George</p> <p>23 do jumping jacks and stretches together</p> | <p>3  fish</p> <p>make up a story about FISH</p> <p>draw some pictures</p> <p>10 sing your ABC's</p> <p>talk about things HOT and COLD</p> <p>24 ENJOY a stack of pancakes for breakfast</p> | <p>4  music</p> <p>move to some music</p> <p>HDWL at the MOON tonight</p> <p>18 READ a book TOGETHER!</p> <p>mail a letter to a friend</p> <p>25 CELEBRATE AFRICAN AMERICAN History Month - check your local LIBRARY for special stories and activities</p> | <p>5  grapes - EAT them up!</p> <p>count ten</p> <p>make a card for Someone Special</p> <p>12 walk on your tip toes</p> <p>19 build with blocks, legs or boxes</p> | <p>6  compliments</p> <p>pay Someone you've nice</p> <p>thanks</p> <p>a compliment</p> <p>13 FIND a ruler, and MEASURE STUFF!</p> <p>count all the windows in your house</p> <p>20 POLAR BEAR DAY, 27</p> <p>study about their habitat</p> | <p>7  toys</p> <p>wash day for toys</p> <p>HAPPY VALENTINES DAY</p> <p>14 Look at your baby pictures... how have you changed?</p> <p>21 check out some books from the LIBRARY</p> <p>28</p> |



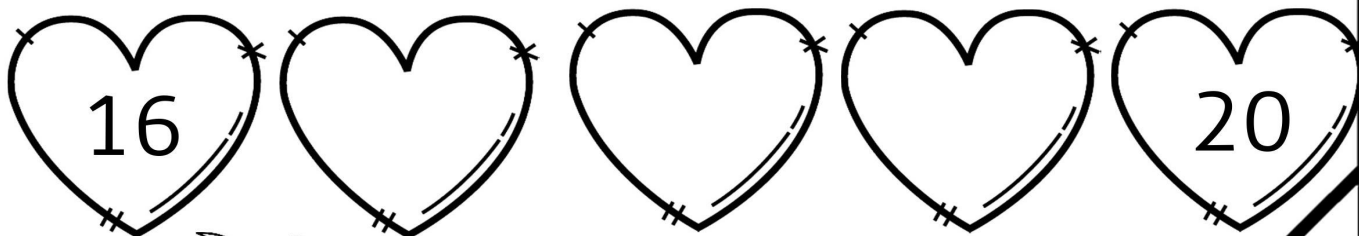
# Missing Numbers to 20



Directions: Write down the missing numbers.



Valentine



# Meat/Meat Alternate

## LEARN IT

The meat and meat alternate group is made up of lean meats, poultry, seafood, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds, legumes and beans. With the exception of water, protein is the main component of our muscles, bones, and organs. A diet rich in protein helps to build and maintain the tissues of our body. While it is important to consume enough protein, we must also ensure that it is lean and low in saturated fats and cholesterol.

## PLAY IT

**Learning with Blocks** Proteins are building blocks for our bodies and kids love block activities. Try some of these out for your next craft learning time.

- Build a block tower
- Make a block maze
- Using paper templates, fill in the templates with blocks to produce that shape
- Measure your body with blocks
- Sort the blocks into different categories – color, shape
- Write letters on the blocks and put them in ABC order
- Write numbers on the blocks and put them in numerical order
- Use the letter blocks to create sight words

## EAT IT

### Black Bean Dip

- 15 oz can Black beans, rinsed & drained
- 2 tsp Lemon juice
- Basil to taste
- Garlic powder to taste

In a food processor, blend beans into dip consistency. Add lemon juice, basil and garlic and mix thoroughly. Serve with veggies or whole wheat chips.

## READ IT

During your next circle time, read these books about protein and of course, a silly meat and meat alternate selection by Dr. Seuss!

*The Meat and Protein Group*  
by Helen Frost

*Why We Eat Protein* by Beth Bence Reinke  
*Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss

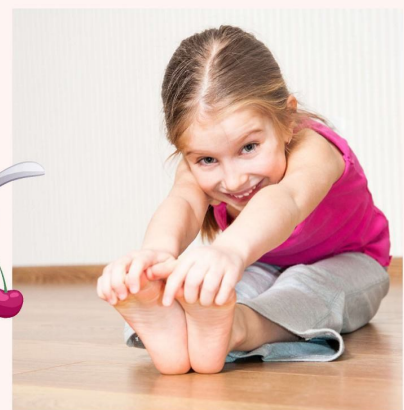


## MOVE IT

**Strength Exercise Dice** We know protein helps our bodies build strong bones and muscles. Let's put them to use! Ask children to take turns rolling the exercise dice. The whole group will then complete the exercise. They will think of this as more of a game than actual exercise!

Using a plain box, create an exercise die with six exercises. Use the following or create your own:

- 5 sit ups
- 5 push-ups
- 5 step crab walk
- hold plank for 10 seconds
- 5 squats
- 5 squat jumps
- 10 jumping jacks
- hold superman pose for 10 seconds
- hold bridge for 10 seconds
- wheelbarrow walk with a partner



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