

Red Velvet Cookies

Recipe by Tori Porter at made by Tori



Makes between 10 and 20 cookies depending on cutter size.

Ingredients:

- 150g unsalted soft butter
- 150g caster sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp almond extract
- 1 medium egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp red food colouring
- 10g cocoa powder
- 290g plain flour, plus more for dusting

1. Cream the butter, sugar, salt, vanilla and almond extract until just combined. Don't overwork or the cookies will spread during baking.
2. Beat in the egg until just combined and add the red colouring. Sieve in the flour and cocoa powder and mix on low speed until a dough forms. Gather it into a ball, wrap it in cling film and chill it for 1 hour.
3. Place the dough on a floured surface and knead it briefly. Roll it out to an even thickness and use a heart shaped cutter to cut out the cookies.
4. Use a palette knife to transfer the cookies to a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper, and chill for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180C/160Cfan/350F/gas 4.
5. Bake for 10-15 minutes, depending on size, until they slightly darken at the edges. Leave to cool on a wire rack.
6. To decorate your red heart cookies the possibilities are endless! You could use blue and white icing to recreate the LHM logo as shown in the picture or get creative with different coloured icings and sprinkles.

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Happy Anniversary!

We hope you all had a very Happy New Year! We at the office are very excited about 2014 as we are celebrating Little Hearts Matters 20th anniversary. We have some great things happening throughout the year to make it a really special one.

Here are some things to keep an eye out for each month:

January - We launch our 20 stories for 20 years campaign. We will be speaking to 20 different people and organisations that have been connected with the charity and they will get a chance to tell you what LHM has meant to them.

February - Is our Big Hearted Bake month, where we encourage all our members to do a bake sale to raise money for LHM. We are also launching our Anniversary merchandise this month; badges, mugs and teddy bears will be available to buy for yourself, friends and family.

March - The big one: it's our annual Open Day on the 22nd of March, which all members are invited to. To apply for your space and to find out more details check out our website www.lhm.org.uk

April - It's Easter so perhaps hold an Easter Egg hunt in your garden and charge an entrance fee with all proceeds going to LHM.

May - There is going to be an abseil challenge in Birmingham, which all members are invited to take part in; medical conditions permitting. Please contact us for more details at info@lhm.org.uk

June - Know anyone that's a keen marathon runner? Maybe ask them to take part in the 'Almost a Marathon' and run 20 sponsored miles for LHM.

July - Our young members are going to be getting a present from LHM: a packet of Smarties. All we ask is that in return you fill the empty tube with as many 20p's as you can squeeze in there and return them to the LHM office. What a yummy way to fundraise! And if it couldn't get any better we are also planning a Youth Activity Event for some point in the summer holidays as well.

August - We have some charity spaces available for the Ride 100 bike ride taking place in London. If you know any enthusiastic cyclists up for a challenge, get them training and apply for one of our spaces!

October - Hand Made Hearts - this is your chance to get creative and make things to sell on behalf of LHM. It could be anything from heart shaped Christmas decorations to heart shaped coasters so get thinking.

November - Our usual Christmas cards go on sale ready for the festive season but we are also selling 20th anniversary Jewellery, designed by Emily Rhoden, the sister of one of your fellow youth members. A great idea for a Christmas present!

December - The season for merriment so some of our members are organising Christmas parties up and down the country. To find out your nearest contact the office 0121 455 8982.

Respecting your Heart-Part of becoming an adult

Written by someone who cares, Suzie Hutchinson



Growing from childhood to adulthood is an exciting time, hopefully full of new opportunities, a bit more freedom from parents and family and the chance to gradually step out on your own.

Even if you have been born with a complex heart problem you still have every right to reach your full potential, basically to achieve as many goals and aims in life as your heart, mind and body will let you, but to make sure that you have as healthy a life as possible you also need to respect your heart because **you** are your hearts keeper, **you** are the main person responsible for keeping it fit and healthy. Of course the surgery, medicines and checks up help. Without those you would not be able to do anything but you are also part of the team looking after your heart function.

So here is the deal, these are areas of life where you need to think about your choices, no one can tell you what to do when you are an adult but you need to understand why some choices are safer/better than others.

Seeing your Cardiologist regularly

OK we know that when you were young someone took you to see the cardiologist. As you get older you can choose who goes with you to the doctors. The point is you are now responsible for making sure that you go to your medical appointments. Other areas of your life are not more important, so even if you move away to study, have other fun things to do or just get fed up of all the tests, you have to remember how important those MOT visits are, the car has a check every year why shouldn't you? The doctors can balance your heart function, tweak your heart efficiency, maximise its potential but they cannot do any of that if you don't go to see them.

Put the date of appointments in your diary, on your phone and tell someone else about them so you don't forget.

Oh and by the way if the doctor thinks you need medications then take them, they don't prescribe them to be difficult, they are trying to give your heart a boost. If you think you don't need a medicine any more talk to your Cardiologist before stopping anything. You are part of the medical team here so you have the right to say what you think but don't put yourself at risk.

So point one is respect your heart and medical team that look after it.

Keeping Fit and well

Ok we all know that sometimes your heart struggles to cope a bit and the doctors will need to treat that but what things can **you do** to help keep fit and well.

Firstly eat properly . Not lots of snacks but proper food, learn how to cook! Plan your meals and if you have a takeaway each week that's ok but try not to live on burger and chips because too much salt and fat is not good for anyone

Remember to get all of your Jabs. The yearly flu jab helps to protect you from most Flu's.

You don't need an infection on top of your heart condition, go and get the Jab and any other immunisations on offer

Keep Fit . I don't mean enter a marathon or even joining a football team because the competitive sport may push your heart too far but a bit of exercise (check which sort with your Cardiologists) will keep your body fitter. *Email us if you would like our new Sports and Exercise booklet.*

Keeping Warm – We know it is not glamorous to wear a coat and of course a hat may muck up your hair but being cold is not good when you have only half a working heart. Keep warm so your heart doesn't waste energy trying to pump blood down to your toes and fingers because you haven't bothered with gloves and socks.

Alcohol – We know that teenagers and young adults like to have a drink. Most social occasions include some sort of alcohol. It can be tough to be different from your friends so firstly find out what the doctor thinks is safe for you, it can be different for every young person. Having gained their wisdom, think about how you are going to fit that into your life. It is your decision but think wisely about it.

Sex – Ok I know that this can be a bit embarrassing to talk about but sex and relationships are part of life and are very much part of being happy as an adult. Relationships are all about respect, understanding each other and in your case your heart condition may be very important for your relationship. If you have questions go and speak to your Cardiologist or Specialist Nurse. They talk about these things all the time and so they will not be embarrassed so you needn't be either.

Smoking – Yes everyone knows that smoking is bad for your health but lots of young people do it. I bet lots of your friends smoke. So the decision is yours but let me tell you why it will affect your health. Your heart has a tough time pushing blood around your body. Normally two pumps do the job of sending blood to the lungs and then sending oxygen filled blood around the body, you only have one pump trying to do the whole job. Smoking does two things to make that job harder. It fills your lungs with gunge that stops oxygen passing easily into your blood and it causes your blood vessels to go hard making it more difficult to move blood around your body. So you are in charge here. If you choose to smoke you need to understand that you are making your heart work harder.

So point two is respect your heart and yourself.

Mum and Dad –Yes even though you are becoming independent you do still need to think about Mum and Dad or whoever has been looking after you.

It is completely right that you take over the lead in your medical care as you get older but you also have to remember that your family have watched over you, worried about you and where possible have protected you since you were born, sometimes even before. Work with them as you gain your independence. Listen to what they say and use their knowledge to make your decisions. Don't assume that everything they say is wrong even if you don't want to hear it. Sometimes it is good to take on board everyone's information and then go away and quietly make a choice.

So point three is respect your heart and your family.