

READER

A Newsletter for Members of
Healthy America Association • 2018

Healthy Body, Happy Heart Improve Your Heart Health

Every moment of the day, your heart is pumping blood throughout your body. In silent moments, you can hear the thump-thump-thump of its demanding work. Do you take your heart for granted? Most of us will have heart trouble at some point in our lives. Heart disease is the number one killer of women and men in the United States. But you can take steps now to lower your risk.

“About 1 out of 3 people in America will die of heart disease,” says NIH heart disease expert Dr. David C. Goff, Jr. “And about 6 out of every 10 of us will have a major heart disease event before we die.”

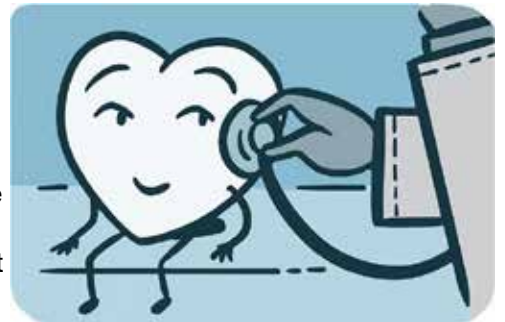
Heart disease develops when the blood vessels supplying the heart become clogged with fatty deposits, or plaque. After the blood vessels narrow, blood flow to the heart is reduced. That means oxygen and nutrients can't get to the heart as easily.

Eventually, an area of plaque can break open. This may cause a blood clot to form on the plaque's surface. A blood clot can block blood flowing to the heart. That can cause a heart attack.

A heart attack happens when a vessel supplying the heart is blocked and the heart can't get enough oxygen, which leads to death of heart muscle.

The three major risk factors for heart disease have been

known since the 1960s: smoking, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels. These were identified in NIH's Framingham Heart Study, a long-term study of people in Framingham, Massachusetts.



“If we could eliminate cigarette smoking, elevated blood pressure, and elevated cholesterol levels, we could eradicate about 9 out of 10 heart attacks in our country,” says Dr. Daniel Levy, a heart specialist at NIH who oversees the Framingham Heart Study currently.

The study has also uncovered other risk factors, including diabetes, obesity, and physical inactivity. Levy's research team is now hunting for genes that may be risk factors for heart disease. By understanding the factors that play a role in heart disease, scientists hope to find new ways to prevent and treat it.

Get Tested

Early heart disease may not cause any symptoms. That's why regular checkups with your doctor are so important.

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“The sad truth is that the vast majority of us has heart disease and we don’t know it,” Goff says.

Blood pressure and cholesterol levels can provide early signs. “People should see their doctor, find out their cholesterol and blood pressure numbers, and if needed, take medication,” advises Goff.

There are many other tests to detect heart disease. An electro-cardiogram, also called an EKG or ECG, measures electrical activity in your heart. It can show how well your heart is working and pick up signs of a previous heart attack.

Another test called an echocardiogram uses sound waves to detect problems. It shows the size, shape, and structures of your heart. It can also measure blood flow through your heart.

Although early heart disease might not cause symptoms, advanced heart disease may cause chest pressure, shortness of breath, or fatigue. Some people may feel lightheaded, dizzy, or confused. Tell your doctor if you’re experiencing any symptoms.

Make Healthy Choices

Talk with your doctor about your risk of heart disease and what you can do to keep your heart healthy.

“The most important things for everyone to do to keep their heart healthy—to keep their entire body healthy—is to eat a healthy diet, get plenty of physical activity, maintain a lean body weight, and avoid smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke,” Goff says.

Following a heart-healthy eating plan is important for everyone. “When someone puts food on their plate, about half the plate should be fruits and vegetables. About a quarter of the plate should be whole grain. And about a quarter should be lean protein, like lean meat or seafood,” says Goff.

If you have high blood pressure, you may want to follow the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet. This diet emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, and low-fat dairy products. To learn more about the diet, see www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash.

Goff also advises, “Avoid foods that have a lot of salt in them. Salt is a major contributor to high blood pressure and risk of heart disease.”

Prevent Diabetes

Diabetes increases your chances of high blood pressure and high cholesterol. You’re also more likely to develop heart disease and have a heart attack.

“Having diabetes is almost like already having heart disease,” says Dr. Larissa Avilés-Santa, a diabetes and heart health expert at NIH. She oversees a large NIH study of heart disease risk factors among more than 16,000 Hispanic/Latino adults.

Avilés-Santa says that sometimes people think that they will develop diabetes and heart disease no matter what they do. But that’s not true. Even if you have a family history of these diseases, you can be the messenger of good health for your family, she says. You can help your family by inspiring healthy habits.

The best way to prevent diabetes is through diet and physical activity. “The evidence is outstanding that very modest changes in lifestyle could reduce the risk of developing diabetes much greater than medication,” Avilés-Santa says.

Get Help

For some people, having a heart attack is the first sign of heart disease. Pain or discomfort in your chest or upper body, a cold sweat, or shortness of breath are all signs of a heart attack.

If you feel any of these signs, get medical help right away. Acting fast can save your life and prevent permanent damage.

Heart disease and heart attacks are major risk factors for cardiac arrest, which is when the heart suddenly stops beating. Blood stops flowing to the brain and other parts of the body. If not treated within minutes, cardiac arrest can lead to death.

Heart disease and heart attacks can also make it harder for your heart’s electrical system to work. As a result, an irregular heartbeat, or arrhythmia, can occur. Your heart may beat too fast, too slow, or with an uneven rhythm. A dangerous arrhythmia can lead to cardiac arrest.

Regular checkups help ensure that a doctor will check your heart for problems. Heart disease and arrhythmias can be treated to lower the risk of cardiac arrest.

Be good to your heart. Don’t take it for granted. Get tested for heart disease, and follow your doctor’s suggestions. See the sidebar for questions you may want to ask your doctor.

Reprinted from newsinhealth.nih.gov

NOTICE of ANNUAL MEETING of MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of the Healthy America Association will be held at 16476 Wild Horse Creek Road, Chesterfield, Missouri, on Friday, December 28, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting of any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY

Healthy America Association December 28, 2018 Annual Meeting of Members THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF HEALTHY AMERICA ASSOCIATION

The undersigned member of the Healthy America Association does hereby constitute and appoint the President of the Healthy America Association, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Healthy America Association and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

- (1) FOR (), or to () WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors: Jim Zimmermann, Nolan Broughton and Steve Bunce
- (2) In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy when properly executed will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____, 2018.

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 16476 Wild Horse Creek Road, Chesterfield, Missouri 63017 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

Chesterfield, Missouri

November 26, 2018

Date

When Food Consumes You

Taking Eating to Extremes

How do you feel after you eat? Satisfied? Too full? Or maybe even guilty? Being too focused on food can sometimes turn into an eating disorder.

People with eating disorders have severe, persistent, and unhealthy thoughts and behaviors about food. As a result, they might eat way too little or way too much.

Eating disorders are not a lifestyle choice. They are serious illnesses. They affect your body's ability to get proper nutrition. This can lead to health issues, such as heart and kidney problems, or even death.

The three most widely recognized eating disorders are binge-eating disorder, bulimia nervosa, and anorexia nervosa. Binge-eating disorder is the most common eating disorder in the United States.



“Binge-eating is not just a lot of overeating,” explains Dr. Cynthia Bulik, an expert on eating disorders at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “There’s this sense of loss of control. You start eating and you feel like you just can’t stop.”

People with binge-eating disorder eat well beyond being full. They often eat until they feel very uncomfortable. Afterward, they’re usually overcome by feelings of guilt, shame, and distress. Eating too much too often can lead to weight gain and can be associated with obesity.

When binge-eating is followed by “purging,” it’s called bulimia nervosa. People with bulimia nervosa may follow binge-eating by vomiting or taking laxatives to purge, over-exercising, or fasting. They’re often able to maintain a normal weight because they compensate for the extra calories. But bulimia nervosa can cause other health issues, like heart irregularities or problems with the digestive system.

People with anorexia nervosa are on the other extreme. They eat very little. They may see themselves as overweight, even when they are dangerously underweight. It’s the least common of the three eating disorders, but is often the most deadly.

An eating disorder can develop for anyone, at any body weight or shape, and at any time. But they often start in the teen or young adult years.

“When young people show signs of an eating disorder, there is this tendency to think that they might outgrow it or that it’s just a phase,” Bulik says. “But the most likely path is in the direction of developing a full-blown eating disorder.”

What causes eating disorders isn’t known. Genes and family history, mental and emotional health, and environment and culture can all influence whether someone develops one of these complex conditions. Some NIH-funded researchers are studying possible genetic causes for eating disorders. Others are looking for changes in the brain. They hope their studies will help guide how eating disorders are diagnosed and treated.

Many people with eating disorders may not think they need treatment. So family members and friends can be very helpful. Express concern. Say you’re there to listen.

“If you’re concerned that you or a family member might have an eating disorder, the key is really to see a health professional with expertise in eating disorders for an evaluation,” Bulik says.

Treatment plans are tailored to individual needs. They may include talk therapy, nutritional counseling, and medications. With treatment, you can return to healthier eating habits and prevent serious complications.

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**Healthy America Association
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Unhealthy Eating Habits

You can't tell by someone's size if they have an eating disorder. But you can look for certain signs:

- Skipping meals, making excuses for not eating, or eating in secret or separately.
- Persistent worrying or talking about healthy eating, exercise, being overweight, or losing weight.
- Eating much more food in a meal or snack than what's considered normal.
- Eating large amounts of sweets or high-fat foods.
- Leaving during meals to use the toilet.
- Expressing depression, disgust, shame, or guilt about eating habits.
- Frequently checking the mirror for perceived flaws.

The *Healthy America Association Reader* is published by:

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For information regarding your membership and association discounts, call or write:

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