





Cardiac Risk Factors

Extensive clinical and statistical studies have identified several factors that increase the risk of coronary heart disease and heart attack. The American Heart Association has identified several risk factors that include traits and lifestyle habits which increase your risk of heart disease. Some risk factors can be modified, treated or controlled while others cannot. The more risk factors an individual has, the greater their chance of developing coronary heart disease. Similarly, the greater the level of each risk factor, the greater the risk.

Risk factors that cannot be changed include:

- Increasing age – Over 83 percent of people who die of coronary heart disease are 65 or older. Men 45 years or older or women 55 years or older are at an increased risk.
- Gender – Men have a greater risk of heart attack than women do.
- Heredity – Children of parents with heart disease are more likely to develop it themselves. Having a father or brother with heart disease before 55 years old or a mother or sister with heart disease before 65 years old indicates a positive family history.

Risk factors that you can modify, treat or control through lifestyle changes or medication include:

- Tobacco Smoke – Smokers' risk of developing coronary heart disease is two to four times that of nonsmokers. Smoking damages the lining in your arteries, constricts or narrows blood vessels, decreases HDL (good cholesterol) and increases blood pressure and heart rate. People who smoke a pack of cigarettes a day have more than twice the risk of having a heart attack than people who have never smoked. Exposure to other people's smoke increases the risk of heart disease even for nonsmokers. As soon as you quit smoking you begin to repair some of the damage. The risk of heart disease is reduced by 50 percent within one year after quitting. 
- High Blood Cholesterol – Cholesterol is a type of fat that is present in some foods. It is also produced by your liver and is released into the blood stream. As blood cholesterol rises so does the risk of coronary heart disease. When other risk factors are present, such as high blood pressure and tobacco smoke, this risk increases even more. A person's cholesterol level is also affected by age, sex, heredity and diet. 
- High Blood Pressure – High blood pressure increases the heart's workload causing the heart to thicken and become stiffer. This stiffening of the heart muscle causes the heart not to work properly. It increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, kidney failure and congestive heart failure. Although blood pressure fluctuates, the ideal blood pressure is below 120/80. The most common way to control high blood pressure is through medication and lifestyle modification, including weight loss, smoking cessation, regular exercise, reducing salt and fat intake, avoiding alcohol and caffeine and learning relaxation and stress reducing techniques. *(Continued on page 3)*



Pharmacy Corner

The Importance of Plavix and Effient

Plavix (clopidogrel) and Effient (prasugrel) are two types of antiplatelet medications that are commonly prescribed for patients who have undergone an angioplasty or stenting procedure on their heart. Plavix is also sometimes prescribed to help prevent stroke and heart attack for patients that have cardiovascular disease. An antiplatelet medication is a type of drug that helps keep platelets from sticking together in the bloodstream, decreasing the risk of clots that can lead to a blocked artery. When blood clots form in an artery that supplies the heart with blood a heart attack can occur. Most patients who have had angioplasty and/or heart stents will be prescribed Effient or Plavix along with aspirin to prevent the formation of blood clots in the heart's arteries. **It is extremely important to take your medication exactly as prescribed by the doctor to prevent a heart attack. If you stop taking Plavix or Effient before the doctor has recommended, it is likely that you may develop a blood clot in the heart and suffer a heart attack.**



Some patients do experience side effects from Plavix or Effient. Please contact your doctor for advice immediately if you experience side effects. Because these medications work in a similar way, the side effects for both are similar and include:

- Nosebleeds
- Bloody or black, tarry stools
- Chest pain
- Severe stomach pain
- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Swelling or shortness of breath
- Fever, chills, sore throat
- Red or dark brown urine
- Lightheadedness or fainting

Some less serious side effects include:

- Diarrhea, nausea, upset stomach
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Back pain

(Continued on page 3)

What's the Question?

"I try to look for foods that are 'fat-free' when I am grocery shopping. Can you tell me if this is the best way to try to purchase foods that are healthy for me?"

Just because something says it is "fat-free" on the label doesn't necessarily mean that the food item is good for you. Although fat content is important when making good food choices, it is not the only nutrient to consider when deciding if a food should be included in your diet. Some foods which are fat-free or very low in fat may be high in calories, salt or sugar. Fats often give foods its flavor, so when it is removed from food manufacturers often replace it with sugar or other fillers to make it palatable. Fat is actually necessary in our diets, but the type of fat is what is important when making choices. It is best to limit saturated and trans-fats as these are "unhealthy fats" that increase your risk for heart disease. Look for items containing monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats.

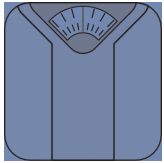

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that you eat a wide variety of nutritious foods daily. All the information you need to compare fats and other nutrients are found on the Nutrition Facts label which can be found on most items you purchase at the grocery store. Here are a few tips to look for when checking out a food label:

- First, look at the serving size and decide how many servings you plan to eat. A serving is based on the amount of food that people typically eat at a meal. If you eat double this amount, you will get double the fat, calories, etc.
- Look at the fat content. Avoid foods high in saturated and trans-fats. Saturated fats are found mostly in meat and whole-milk dairy products. Less than seven percent of your daily calories should come from saturated fat according to AHA guidelines. Trans-fat is frequently found in baked goods and snacks and has been linked to heart disease. "Hydrogenated" is another name used for trans-fat.
- Less is best when looking at cholesterol and sodium content. The AHA strongly recommends a sodium consumption of less than 1500 mg of sodium a day.
- Try to consume between 25-30 grams of fiber per day. Vegetables, fruits and whole-grain foods are good sources of fiber.

(Continued on page 4)

Cardiac Risk Factors

(Continued from front page)

- **Diabetes Mellitus** – Diabetes is a disease that prevents your body from using sugars and starches properly. This may be caused by either an insufficient amount of insulin or by the body’s inability to use insulin effectively. With this condition you are more likely to have damage to the artery walls. Diabetes seriously increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. One out of two people with diabetes does not even know they have the disease. If you have diabetes, it is extremely important to work with your healthcare provider to manage and control any other risk factors that may be present. Diabetes can be controlled through proper diet, exercise, weight reduction and medication.
- **Obesity and Overweight** – People who have excess body fat, especially if a lot of it is at the waist, are more likely to develop heart disease and stroke even if they have no other risk factors. Excess weight increases the heart’s workload. It also raises blood pressure and blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels and lowers HDL (good) cholesterol levels. By losing as few as ten pounds, you can lower your heart disease risk. 
- **Physical Inactivity** – An inactive lifestyle is a risk factor for coronary heart disease. Regular, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity helps prevent heart and blood vessel disease. Lack of exercise is really an “in direct risk” because exercise helps reduce other risk factors such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes and obesity.
- **Stress** – There is not a direct relationship between stress and the development of coronary artery disease, but it has been suggested that the effects of stress on the cardiovascular system may be from the release of certain hormones such as adrenaline, into the blood stream. This causes an increase in the heart rate, blood pressure, sweating response, muscle tightness and the amount of fat circulating in the blood. You can not eliminate stress from your life, but you can learn to control how you respond to stress and take actions to help reduce stress in your life. 

As you can see, most of the risk factors for heart disease can be controlled. It often takes some modification and change in lifestyle, but these changes can make a lifetime of difference! Please give the word search found in this newsletter a try, and use it as a time to reflect on your risk factors and how you can make changes to improve them.

Quote from the Heart

“I have learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances.”

- Martha Washington, Wife of George Washington,
First President of the United States



“People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out or completely give up on anyone.”

-Audrey Hepburn, British Actress and Humanitarian

“The best things in life aren’t things.”

- Unknown

“Each day comes bearing its own gifts. Untie the ribbons.”

- Ruth Ann Schabacker, Author

Pharmacy Corner

(Continued from page 2)

It is generally recommended that patients avoid taking over the counter pain relievers for discomfort such as ibuprofen, aspirin or Aleve while taking Plavix or Effient unless their physician has given them permission. Please contact your healthcare provider if you have questions about these medications or if you have difficulty paying for this medicine. Your physician’s office may be able to help you locate resources and/or financial assistance for these medications.



Heart Rock Café



Homemade Sour Cream

1 (24 oz.) carton low-fat cottage cheese
¼ cup nonfat milk

Place cheese in large sieve, and drain thoroughly. Blend the cheese and the milk together until the mixture is the consistency of sour cream.

Yields: 24 (2 tablespoon) servings

Nutritional Information:

Calories: 22

Total Fat: less than 1 g

% Fat: 21

Cholesterol: 2mg

Sodium: 22mg

Seafood Marinara

1 ½ lb. fish of your choice
juice of 1 lemon
1 medium onion, chopped
½ c fresh parsley, chopped
¼ tsp. garlic powder
1 cup tomato puree (unsalted)
½ cup red or white wine
½ tsp. dill weed
⅛ tsp. oregano
⅛ tsp. pepper
1 cup water

Place fish in baking dish. Pour lemon juice on both sides of fish. Sauté onions, parsley and garlic in ½ cup water until golden brown. Add tomato puree, remaining water, wine, dill weed, oregano and pepper to onion mixture. Pour over fish. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 40 minutes.

Serves: 4

Nutritional Information

Calories: 218

Total Fat: 2g

% Fat: 10

Cholesterol: 82mg

Sodium: 166mg

Luncheon Noodles and Tuna

1 (7oz.) pkg. noodles, cooked
2 (9oz.) cans of water packed tuna
6 carrots, cooked and diced
¼ cup onions, chopped
1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
1 (8oz.) can water chestnuts
¼ tsp. pepper
¼ tsp. paprika
¼ tsp. onion powder
sourdough bread crumbs

Mix all ingredients together except bread crumbs, and pour into two quart casserole dish. Spread sourdough bread crumbs on top. Bake uncovered in 350 degree oven for 30 minutes.

Serves: 10

Nutritional Information:

Calories: 166

Total Fat: 1g

% Fat: 7

Cholesterol: 14mg

Sodium: 179mg

Parisian Carrots

1 small onion, minced
¼ cup water
2 cup cooked carrots, sliced
pepper to taste
1 tsp. parsley, minced

Brown onion in water until golden. Add carrots and pepper. Heat thoroughly. Before serving, sprinkle with parsley.

Serves: 4

Nutritional Information:

Calories: 41

Total Fat: less than 1g

% Fat: 3

Cholesterol: 0mg

Sodium: 52mg

Chocolate Brownie

1 cup low-fat Ricotta cheese
⅔ all-fruit sweetener
1 tsp. vanilla
¼ all-purpose flour
3 tbsps. Dutch process cocoa
1 tsp. baking powder
reduced fat egg product equal to 3 eggs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine Ricotta, sweetener and vanilla in a medium bowl, Set aside for 10 minutes. Combine flour, cocoa and baking powder in a separate bowl. Stir egg product into Ricotta mix, adding flour mix - blend well. Pour into an 8 or 9 inch square baking pan that has been coated with non-stick spray. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Served cold it is like a brownie, and served warm it is like pudding.

Serves: 4

Nutritional Information:

Calories: 294

Total Fat 7.5g

% Fat22

Cholesterol: 19mg

Sodium: 191mg

What's the Question? *(Continued from page 2)*

- The more sugar a food item contains the more calories the food has.

Want to learn more about reading a food label? St. Mary's Heart Institute offers free Label Reading Classes by one of our Cardiac Rehab Staff members. Give us a call today at 485-5230 to take advantage of this opportunity.

Asthma

According to the American Lung Association, asthma is a type of lung disease that makes it difficult to move air in and out of the lungs. There is no cure for asthma, although it can be managed long-term so that patients can live a healthy, normal life. Asthma can affect people of any age. With asthma the airways in the lungs are often irritated and swollen. People who have asthma are prone to environmental “triggers” which can worsen the inflammation in the lungs. When a person is exposed to a trigger the airways become even tighter or narrower making it difficult to breathe. This is often referred to as an “asthma attack.” Some common environmental asthma triggers are:

- Allergens such as pet dander, bird feathers, pollen, mold or mildew
- Irritants such as cigarette smoke, wood fire smoke or strong smelling perfumes
- Chemicals and cleaning agents
- Cold weather
- Stress
- Lung infections
- Exercise
- Certain foods or medications

It is important for people with asthma to identify their triggers and take measures to avoid exposure to triggers whenever possible to decrease the likelihood of an asthma attack.

Many people who have asthma experience signs and symptoms of breathing difficulty, especially when exposed to a trigger. The following are possible symptoms of asthma:

- Wheezing - a loud, squeaking or whistling type noise that can often be heard when breathing in and out
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chest tightness
- Rapid heartbeat or breathing faster than normal
- Frequent coughing, especially coughing at night

Treatment of asthma depends on the severity of symptoms. Frequently, patients who have asthma will be instructed to measure their breathing using a spirometer to measure how much and how fast they can blow out air, also called peak flow measurements. By closely monitoring peak flow measurements, symptoms can be better managed to prevent asthma flare-ups. Most patients with asthma will be prescribed medications to improve breathing. Some medications will be used to get long-term control of asthma symptoms. Many of these types of medicines work by decreasing and preventing the swelling that occurs in the lungs that make the airways tight. Quick relief medications are used to open the airways quickly. Quick relief medicines open the airways making it easier to breathe. It is important for people with asthma to take their medication regularly and as directed by their physician.

It is also important for people who have asthma to eat a balanced diet that includes all the food groups. A balanced diet will help to improve the immune system to prevent illness. Exercise is often recommended for patients with asthma but should only be started with a physician’s approval. Consistent, regular exercise may help the body and muscles to use oxygen more effectively, making breathing easier. People who have asthma should schedule regular doctor’s visits and report changes in symptoms to improve asthma management.

Find Your Way To Heart ♥ Health

Below you will find a list of risk factors for heart disease. Risk factors increase the chance of developing coronary heart disease and heart attack. Some of these factors can be modified, treated or controlled while some cannot. Use this puzzle as a way to help you evaluate if you are on track in controlling your risk factors or if there are some risk factors you might want to work a little bit harder on controlling (i.e. quitting smoking, adding an extra day of exercise, losing a few pounds, etc.). Words can be found vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

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

AGE
 GENDER
 SMOKING
 OVERWEIGHT

DIABETES
 HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
 STRESS

FAMILY HISTORY
 HIGH CHOLESTEROL
 LACK OF EXERCISE

