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What My Papa Told Me About... HEART DISEASE

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HEART DISEASE

ABCs of Heart Disease

Heart disease is a medical condition that affects millions of Americans. If you are at risk or have heart disease, your chances of having a heart attack rise. Not everyone survives a heart attack, especially if they are taken by surprise. Don't let this happen to you! If you have heart disease or are at risk, learn all you can about how the heart works and why heart disease occurs. Knowledge is the power that can save your life if you suddenly have a heart attack.

There are a variety of places where you can learn about heart disease. First and foremost, see your doctor. Medical professionals can assess your risk and perform tests to make sure that your heart is working as it normally should. Don't be afraid to ask your doctor lots of questions about heart disease. If you have a variety of questions to answer, you may want to even go as far as to schedule an additional appointment so that you are not taking away your doctor's time from other patients. If your doctor refuses to make time to answer your questions, consider taking your business elsewhere. A doctor should always be ready to help you learn about heart disease. When you leave your doctor's office, ask the receptionist or a nurse if there is any literature on the subject that you can take with you.

Literature on heart disease is usually readily available. If you find that it is not at your local doctor's office, visit the hospital or contact any of the many heart disease organizations that are working to teach people across America about heart disease. They should be able to send you information free of cost. Beware of any information given to you by companies trying to see something. These facts are usually skewed, missing, or incorrect.

The greatest resource for information regarding heart disease can be found online. Here, you can participate in web chats and forums to ask questions about heart disease. You can also read articles and participate in online surveys regarding heart disease. Again, readers beware applies for the Internet, because almost anyone can post information online. Make sure that your source is credible. This is a good tip no matter where you search for information. Before long, you'll find that you are the one answering other people's questions about heart disease. Learning about it is the first step toward a heart healthy life.

ACE Inhibitors—Can They Help You?

When it comes to heart disease and heart attacks, ACE inhibitors are going to help regulate the flow of blood to your heart, and are also going to help you get a handle on the things that might cause heart attacks.

There might not be much that you can do about your heart disease. You might be able to prevent it, if you work from a young age, and if you exercise properly and eat the right food. However, what if you haven't been working on it for your whole life? Many times, people go through life and they don't realize that they are doing things that might be damaging to them, and that they are perhaps heading towards heart disease. If you have been living your whole life and haven't been thinking about heart disease you might not have been paying attention to your diet, and to how much exercise you have gotten. Because of this, it might happen that you end up with heart disease and can't do anything to prevent it. This is especially hard to deal with if you have a genetic predisposition towards heart disease. In these circumstances, there might not actually be anything that you can do about heart disease until you have it.

This is where things like ACE Inhibitors come in. An ACE inhibitor is going to help you regulate the blood flow through your body and into your heart. Since most heart attacks are caused by blocked arteries, an ACE Inhibitor is going to help your arteries not be clogged, and you are going to have a less chance of having a heart attack. This is good news for a lot of people, who might be at high risk for heart attack, but can do nothing about their heart disease. ACE Inhibitors can be successfully taken orally by prescription.

If you think that an ACE inhibitor might be a good idea for you, the first thing that you should do is consult your doctor. This should be the very first step that you should take because it is going to show you what you really should be doing when it comes to your heart and to your heart disease. If you think it is for you, first talk to your doctor, and then you can go on from there. It might be that an ACE inhibitor is going to make all of the difference in you and in how you live your life.

Are you at Risk for Heart Disease?

Heart disease is a major killer of Americans every year. Unfortunately, many people do not know that they have heart disease or are at risk for developing heart disease, and so heart attacks come as a surprise to hundreds of thousands of people in this country every year. This does not have to be the case. With a little knowledge about the heart and how the body works, you can learn how to keep your heart healthy for many years. It is extremely important to learn about heart disease. Are you at risk? Studies show that most people are moderate- or high-risk candidates.

Why is it important to assess your risk? Thanks to modern medical knowledge, we can now treat heart disease and make lifestyle changes to positively lower the risk of a heart attack. Many people do not survive heart attacks. This alone is unfortunate, but even worse is that fact that heart attacks often surprise families. If you know you are at risk for a heart attack, you can not only make positive changes in the way you live your life, but you and your family can also learn what to do in the event of a heart attack. This will increase your chances of survival.

First, look at your diet and exercise routine to assess your risk of having a heart attack. If you eat a diet high in fats, you are putting yourself at a high risk. Learn the difference between good fats and bad fats—it is true that your body needs some fats, but not the kind found in a fat food cheeseburger. To go along with that, look at your exercise routine. Are you making sure to exercise every day? If not, you are putting yourself at risk. Being overweight further puts you at risk for having a heart attack. You can get the most accurate look at your diet and exercise effects by studying your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. If they are high, make some lifestyle changes to prevent heart attack.

Other factors can put your at risk as well. For example, smoking increases the chance that you will develop heart disease and have a heart attack. If you are a smoker, quit if possible or at least cut back on the amount you smoke every day. Having diabetes also puts you at risk, as does a family history of heart disease. Even if you feel healthy, it is important to see your doctor if you have more than one sign of heart disease. If you are at risk, learn more about heart disease so you can combat it.

Cholesterol and Heart Disease

For many, the word cholesterol is nothing more than a bad medical term. We know that we are supposed to lower our cholesterol, and we even know that it depends on what we eat, but many people do not know the risks associated with high cholesterol and why it is important to prevent high cholesterol. Simply put, if you have high cholesterol, you put yourself at a high risk for having a heart attack. Heart attacks are devastating, especially when they come as a surprise, and many people who experience a heart attack never recover. Therefore, it is important to know how and why high cholesterol affects the health of your heart.

The heart pumps blood through our bodies, and blood can be seen as a carrier system for the body. Every day, the blood makes its rounds, picking up things at one organ and dropping off oxygen from the lungs and nutrients from the food we eat. Cholesterol is one such nutrient, and it is one of the lipids, or fats found in the body. The body is capable of making enough cholesterol itself, but we eat saturated fats and so these are put into the blood stream. The cholesterol from the saturated fat is used in the production of certain hormones and to build cell walls, so we do need small amounts in the body, but most people eat entirely too much, and so there is a large amount of extra lipids in the body.

Lipoproteins carry the cholesterol through the blood stream. HDL cholesterol is good for the body, and this lipoprotein is found in small amounts. When measuring your cholesterol at a doctor's office, however, what people are concerned with is the LDL (bad) cholesterol levels. If there is too much LDL cholesterol in the blood, these little carriers start bumping into one another and against the blood vessel walls. They often get stuck to the walls, and over time a thick layer of cholesterol builds up. When too much builds up, and there is already a high number of lipoproteins in the blood stream, it is difficult for the blood to pass through in order to reach the heart. The heart must work extra hard to pump the blood, and is stressed. You may then have a heart attack.

Heart attacks require surgery in most case and extensive time in the hospital. You can prevent this by simply eating healthier foods and exercising more regularly. When you keep your heart healthy, your entire life will be healthier, so learn all you can about cholesterol levels and how to keep them down.

Clogged Arteries and High Blood Pressure: How a Heart Attack can Occur

Heart attacks are extremely scary for all people involved and can be deadly if you do not get immediate care. Many people know that having high blood pressure can cause a heart attack. Most also realize that eating unhealthy foods is bad for your heart—fast food is sometimes referred to as a “heart attack sandwich.” However, many people do not understand why these facts are true and how the heart can become diseased. By learning how and why these things happen, you can help motivate yourself to eat a healthier diet and prevent heart attack.

Fattening foods are the main enemy of the heart. They do not hurt the heart itself, but rather hurt the blood vessels. The cholesterol in out foods transfers to the blood stream in a series of processes so that there are more lipids in the blood. As the blood cells bump along the blood stream, some of these lipids are deposited on the walls of the blood vessels. Over time, the walls of the blood vessels build up with this fatty substance, making it harder and harder for the blood, which is already weighed down with fat, to get through the narrow openings. A heart attack happens when no blood can get through. The heart starts to panic and pump overtime trying to get more blood. You’ll experience sweating, chest pains, and pain in your left arm, among other symptoms.

A heart attack can also happen in another way. The build up on the walls of the arteries and veins that are caused by eating fatty foods is called plaque. This plaque is sometimes brittle and can break off. Imagine it like build up in a draining pipe. If a piece breaks off, father down the pipe, it may not be big enough to fit through and when it gets stuck, the water is blocked and backs up into your sink or shower. The same thing happens with your heart. As a large piece of plaque travels down the blood stream, it will eventually become a vessel too small and get stuck, causing a blockage. This results in a heart attack. The same thing can happen with a blood clot if you’ve recently had surgery. However, it the plaque or clot doesn’t get to a small enough blood vessel to get stuck, it travels to the brain and a stroke occurs.

In either case, you may not survive. It is important, therefore, to eat heart-healthy foods and less fatty diets in general. This can save your life, especially if you have a genetic predisposition to heart disease.

Dealing with Heart Attacks in Family Members

A heart attack is a serious and scary medical condition to experience for everyone, but it is also frightening for friends and family members who must see a loved one go through a heart attack. Victims of a heart attack are treated thoroughly, but many forget that other may need help to

get through the experience as well. If you are the friend or family member of a heart attack victim, try to keep your cool and be prepared. Don't forget to ask for help when you need it.

If you see someone having a heart attack, do not panic. Call for help. Sometimes, victims aren't the only people who need help. This is especially true for spouses—when they see their husband or wife have a heart attack, they go into shock. If you are watching a loved one have a heart attack, try to stay calm and focus on your own breathing. Walk away from the area if you have to in order to calm down. The paramedics don't need a shock victim on their hands as well! If you feel light-headed, make sure you sit down and move away from the action.

If you're dealing with a heart attack victim, it is important to remember that doctors are doing all they can to help your loved one. At the hospital, approach the nurses' station and follow their directions. The sooner you fill out paperwork, the soon you can see your loved one. Sometimes, you cannot see your loved one or fill out paperwork for him or her. Hospitals have strict rules about which family members can perform these actions, so if you are a sibling of the victim, you may need to call a spouse or parent. Make sure you have a cell phone on hand.

When you are allowed to go into the victim's room, try to remain calm. Depending on the severity of the heart attack, he or she may be hooked up to a number of machines or may be asleep. Heart attacks are very stressful and painful so your loved one may have been given medications to deal with the pain that make him or her act very strangely. If your loved one has to stay in the hospital for a number of days, ask his or her nurses what personal items will be needed and when visiting hours are. Visit your loved one often and offer support through this difficult period in life.

Exercise—Heart Disease's Worst Enemy

One of the best defenses that a person has against heart disease is actually exercise. You might not think it is true, but when it comes down to it, the best way to make sure that you don't get heart disease, or the best way for you to ward it off if you have a genetic disposition towards heart disease, is to make sure that you are getting a proper amount of exercise.

Exercise can provide your body, and your heart, with many things. First of all, it can give you a chance to make sure that your body is really working well. It can make sure that your heart is beating as it should be, and it can also make sure that the blood is getting pumped to your body like it is supposed to be.

When you are getting the proper amount of exercise, you are going to be making your heart much stronger. This happens because as you exercise, you force your heart to be beating more and more, and faster and faster. By exercising often, and building up the strength of your heart, you are going to be creating a stronger heart, that can go for longer and that can beat faster without making your body work harder. If you can keep exercising so that your body is getting stronger and stronger, you are going to see that exercise is also going to make your heart stronger.

And a strong heart is very important when it comes to preventing heart disease. You are going to see that those people who have stronger hearts are much less likely to develop heart disease because heart disease is going to be more prone to attacking weaker hearts. If you can make and keep your heart strong, you are going to see that you have a less chance of developing heart disease. Remember that this is something that you can be doing on a daily basis, and it is going to help your heart to be stronger and stronger.

A good idea is to develop an exercise regime that makes your heart work. You should start by doing something that will make your heart pump harder than it pumps every day, and you should gradually increase the time that you are performing this task, and how quickly your heart is pumping. The idea is to build up endurance, so that your heart can work harder and longer without having much strain. Once you have built up a great endurance, your heart is going to be much healthier.

Fainting—Is it really Harmless?

Imagine this: You are in a business meeting with your boss and some co-workers and are asked to give a presentation. You're well prepared and confident, so you stand up and walk to the front of the room. Suddenly, you find yourself blinking and laying on the floor surrounded by your co-workers. It seems that you have fainted! Everyone chalks it up to nerves, but you are confused—you never had stage fright before.

When you faint, it could be for a number of reasons. It is important to see a doctor regarding your fainting, because it could indicate an underlying heart condition. Cardiac syncope, or fainting that is caused by a heart condition, is extremely serious, as it could be fatal if gone unchecked. In some cases, you simply do faint because of heat, nerves, fever, or other things. However, if you faint for what seems to be no reason at all, see a doctor right away.

There are two main kinds of cardiac syncope. The first is a variety known as obstructive cardiac lesions. The heart is an intricate organ with many blood vessels coming to and from the heart and a variety of valves opening and closing at exactly the right moment to let the correct amounts of blood in and out of the heart. If any of these passages become blocked for any reason, you could experience fainting. A doctor will perform an echocardiogram to look at your heart and see if any blockages could be causing you to faint. If so, the blockages should be removed so that you do not have a heart attack so that a blood clot doesn't travel in the blood stream and cause a stroke.

More commonly, cardiac syncope is caused by cardiac arrhythmias. These often cause sudden death and so are very dangerous. There are two main kinds in this category. First, bradycardia is caused by disease in the sinus node or disease of the specialized conduction system. The sinus node is the body's natural pacemaker. Here is the spot of origin for the electrical pulse that pumps your heart. When your sinus node is diseased, your heart beats more slowly. Fainting is a common symptom. When your specialized conduction system is not working properly, the

electrical impulse is blocked from reaching all parts of the heart, which also causes fainting and can be the cause of instant death. Cardiac arrhythmias can also be caused by too much electrical impulse. This condition is known as tachycardia and causes the heart to beat too rapidly. Again, it may cause fainting and is known to cause death in some cases.

Heart Disease: Not Just for Men

In the past it was thought that the greatest risk for heart disease lied with men and not with women. However, in recent years it has come to be known that women, in fact, are at a huge risk for heart disease. Heart disease is actually one of the biggest causes for death among adult women.

This is partly genetic, remember. Most of the people who have heart disease have a genetic disposition towards it. However, this means that even those that have a genetic disposition have a chance to get around it, and not develop heart disease. No matter if you are going to be prone through your genetics to develop heart disease, or if you are simply a person who does not have it in your history, if you are a woman, there are things that you should be doing to lessen your risk of developing heart disease.

First of all, it is important to know that the best thing a woman can do to prevent heart disease is to get enough exercise. This is very important because by being in good shape, a woman can help her heart to be strong and to get in the right shape that it needs to be in to do the body's work. Also, by staying in shape, a woman can help her heart work with the energy that comes from the food she is eating. As long as she stays in shape, a woman can help her body use the fat from the foods that she is eating, and it will not have a chance to sit around in her arteries.

Another thing that all women should be aware of is that her diet is going to play a huge role in whether or not she develops heart disease, and how powerful that might be. In order to be healthy, a woman needs to be eating a balanced diet, and not one that is going to be dangerous for her. A woman should be eating a proper amount of food within the correct food groups, so that she is able to digest the foods properly and use the energy to live her life. This is something that most women might not think about, because a diet does not seem, on the surface, to be related to heart disease. However, eating the right foods is absolutely essential to being and staying healthy.

Heart Disease Deaths: Picking up the Pieces

Unfortunately for many families across the United States, heart disease is a killer that rips apart parents and their children. This unfortunate medical condition is highly preventable, and so a death in the family is even harder to deal with for a number of spouses and children. If someone in your family has recently passed away due to a heart attack, there are a number of things you can do to help yourself move on with life in a healthy and happy way.

First of all, seek grief counseling, no matter what your loved one has died from. Heart disease usually results in a heart attack, and death is sometimes very sudden. Unlike longer illnesses, families do not have time to prepare for the shock of losing a loved one. Talking to a therapist can help you cope, and it is important to seek help if you feel thoughts of suicide or deep depression. Mourning is ok, but do so in a healthy way.

You may wish to speak with heart disease prevention organization about ways in which you can raise awareness about heart disease in your own community so that your friends and neighbors do not have to experience a loss such as you have. A number of groups can send you literature about heart disease to distribute and you can set up memorial funds in your loved one's name for people to donate to. Raising money for heart disease will help find better prevention techniques and cures for these medical conditions.

It is also important to realize that you may be at risk for having a heart attack as well. If your spouse had a heart attack, chances are that you have been eating a similar diet and living a similar lifestyle. Instead of worrying, go to your doctor's and get the health of your heart checked. If you are at risk, change your lifestyle to help decrease your risk of heart attack. If it was a parent who passed away from heart disease, you not only are at risk because of your lifestyle, but you also have a genetic predisposition for heart disease. It is crucial that you begin to eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, stay away from cigarettes, and lose weight. See your doctor regularly.

When someone dies from heart disease, life does go on. Mourning is very healthy, but suffering is not. Remember to take care of yourself and your other family members but talking to your doctor and learning from past mistakes.

Heart Stents—Do You Need Them?

There are many people in the world that might be at a high risk for heart disease and for heart attacks and a great number of these people don't even know it. You should be aware of the dangers, symptoms, and treatment options in case you have a heart attack. It might be that you have a genetic predisposition towards heart attacks because of what runs in your family. With a good diet and lots of exercise, you can stay out of the danger zone, but just in case you are still at risk, learn how stents can help you improve your heart's health.

No matter how well you live your life, there is a chance that you might have to deal with heart disease or with heart attacks. In some of these cases, there are things that you can do to help yourself through life. One of these thing is to have heart stents implanted in your heart. These work as extra valves, and help you to move the blood through your heart at a good rate. If you have a heart stent, you know that your heart isn't going to have to work as hard, because it is going to be like putting an extra door into a crowded room. There is simply going to be more of a chance for people, or blood, to get through.

Stents can also help to hold open your heart's arteries if they are in danger of becoming clogged. This will increase blood flow and, once again, help your heart work more efficiently. May heart attack patients receive stents after already having a heart attack in order to prevent total heart failure or to prevent another heart attack.

Remember that since this is a surgical procedure, your doctor can let you know if he thinks that this is a good idea for you. If he or she says that it is, consider that there are many different options when it comes to heart stents. Review each of them with your doctor and check with your insurance provider to see what is covered and what is not. Stents, because they require surgery, are expensive to place into the heart and so you should make sure your procedure is covered before having it done. In most cases, it is. If not, talk to your doctor about other options so that you can make a good decision for your body.

How a Heart Attack Happens

A heart attack is something that no one wants for themselves or anyone they know--just to say the words calls up images of people who cannot get up off the floor, cannot breathe, and who are in dire circumstances. You never want to feel like you are having a heart attack, and you certainly don't want anyone that you know and love to go through a heart attack. However, there are things that you should know because if you are going to ever have to deal with a heart attack you should be aware of the symptoms and how a heart attack happens so that you can be sure that either you or your loved ones gets the best help possible if you are facing a heart attack.

First of all, a heart attack happens when blood can't get to your heart. This is usually caused by a blocked artery, which doesn't allow the blood to get to your heart as it should be able to do. When this happens, there is going to be pain, and your heart is going to begin to beat irregularly because it is not going to be able to pump the blood as it is supposed to be pumping.

There are many things that can cause a heart attack. If you haven't been eating the right kind of diet, fat deposits can build up in your arteries, which are going to restrict the flow of blood to your heart. Also, if you aren't exercising enough, you are going to see that you are going to have a greater chance of having a heart attack than you would have if you were exercising often.

There are many symptoms that you might associated with a heart attack. If you are having a heart attack, many people will first claim that they have a feeling like they have eaten too much, or a stiff feeling in their chest. This might be accompanied by chest pain or by a feeling of acid reflux, or heart burn. If this persists for a long time, it could be the signs of something much more serious. Another symptom of a heart attack might be a shooting pain in your left arm. This is usually what most people associate with the pain of a heart attack, and it has to do with the arteries that exist there. Seek medical attention immediately if you think you may be experiencing a heart attack.

How the Heart Works

The heart is something that is very tricky. It is one of the most important organs in our body, because it provides the rest of our body with blood. Because of the blood that our heart pumps to the rest of our body, our body gets oxygen, which is the building block of the cells and which helps our bodies to do the things that they need to do in order to be alive. So, the heart is very important. Even though the brain controls the heart, and everything else, the brain cannot live without the blood that the heart provides. Therefore, knowing the heart and understanding how it works is an important step into keeping us healthy.

The heart is basically a pump that everyone has in his or her chest. The blood is routed in our bodies so that it flows through it. The blood goes in one side of your heart, and comes out the other. While the blood is in your heart, it receives fresh oxygen from the lungs. Our lungs are very important for our body. When you take in air, your lungs gather the oxygen. When we breathe out, carbon dioxide and other unneeded components in the air are released back into the world.

This oxygen travels through the bloodstream to the heart. The blood stream comes into the heart through blood vessels. Once it has fresh blood, which has fresh oxygen in it, the blood leaves the heart and travels to every bit of our body, taking the oxygen with it, so that our cells can be alive. Wherever it goes, our cells take the oxygen out of the blood, so the blood must once again return to the heart to gather oxygen. This all happens extremely quickly, so your heart must be constantly pumping and you must constantly breathe.

Because of this, our heart is very important. However, there are several things that can go wrong with our hearts. One of these things is heart disease. You might have a genetic predisposition to heart disease, which means that it runs in your family. If this is the case, it is going to be something that just might happen to you. However, like any genetic predisposition, heart disease is something that relies on several factors to get it started. If you can avoid these factors, you are going to have a greater chance of not getting heart disease.

Is an Implanted Cardioverter Defibrillator Right for You?

In 2001, Vice President Dick Cheney has surgery on his heart to receive and implanted cardioverter defibrillator, commonly known as an ICD. This machine can help save lives after having a heart attack, but it is not for everyone. Basically, it works sort of like a pacemaker. Rapid irregular rhythms in the heart, known as ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation, can cause instant death. The ICD detects this sudden change and automatically sends a programmed shock to the heart to restore order. The ICD unit prevents sudden death from occurring in heart disease patients.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the United States alone die from sudden death after a heart attack. These deaths are usually attributed to ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation

after a major heart attack. If you have a heart attack and are at high risk for these conditions, an ICD may be right for you.

However, many doctors may not recommend an ICD for you after a heart attack, even if you are at risk. This is not typical routine procedure because doctors are under constant pressure to find cheaper alternatives. This puts your life at risk. If you have a heart attack ask about ICD options. The procedures to test for your risk are not difficult and the surgery is relatively simple. Basically, it could save your life—and it does for the thousands of patients who get them every year. Sudden death after a heart attack does not have to be as common as it really is. After you are out of the danger zone when you have a heart attack, it is important to ask to be screened for high risk of sudden death. If you do not ask, you might never receive the screening.

To screen you for high risk, an ejection fraction is first measured. If it is less than 40%, you might be at high risk and your doctor should continue the screening process. An EP test is next. In this test, the electrical system of the heart is screened and if it is found to be unstable, an ICD should be your option.

It is important to understand the implications of your heart disease in order to make the best decisions possible. Not all doctors are looking out for your health and sometimes doctors may simply make mistakes. By looking out for your own interests you can make sure you are getting the best care possible, whether it includes an ICD or not.

Is Digoxin for You?

A heart attack is something that no one wants to deal with. There are many people in the world that might be at a high risk for heart disease and for heart attacks. If this is you, you know that you are aware of the dangers. The first thing is that you should make sure you are eating a good diet that is low in fat and is not going to clog your arteries. You know that clogged arteries are the main cause of heart disease and heart attacks. You also know that the second thing and perhaps the most important thing that you should be doing in order to protect your heart is getting enough exercise.

If you know that if you have a genetic predisposition towards heart disease and towards heart attacks, chances are good that you are going to have one of them. However you also know that in the case of anything that you might have a genetic disposition towards, heart disease and heart attacks are the same, as in if you have a good diet and get good exercise, you are going to be much less likely to develop these things.

However, in the end, it might simply be that you need a drug to regulate the way that your heart works, and to keep your heart disease at bay. In these cases, Digoxin is a drug that is going to help your heart beat as it should, and lessen the effects of your heart disease. If you have been dealing with small heart attacks, Digoxin is a good idea because it is going to allow you to live your life as you would without heart disease. It will help you to break down the fat in the foods that you are eating so that you aren't having any problems with clogged arteries, and

it is going to help you regulate the beating of your heart so that you are less prone to having a heart attack.

Consult your doctor if you think that Digoxin is the right way for your go. You might be feeling that this is something that you need in your life, so it might be something that is going to help you. Your doctor or another health care professional is going to be able to tell you for sure. Like any medication, Digoxin has a number of side effects and does not work for everyone, so by discussing your options with a doctor you can make sure you are making the best health decisions possible.

Preventing Heart Disease: It is Possible

There are many things that you can do to prevent heart disease. First of all, there might be genetic factors that say that you have a higher potential for developing heart disease. If this is the main factor, then there might not be much that you can do about the idea that you might indeed get heart disease. However, no matter whether or not you have genetic factors that say you are more prone to heart disease, there are some things that you should consider. Even if you have more of a genetic factor that says you might develop heart disease, there are certain things that you can do. Even if you have the tendency to develop heart disease at a certain point in your life, there are things that you can do which will greatly increase your chances of not developing heart disease – or at the very least, of delaying your development of heart disease as long as possible.

Most of the things that you can do to prevent heart disease are much easier than you'd think they would be. First of all, you should know that the best way to prevent heart disease, no matter what your genetic disposition towards it is, is to exercise often. By exercising, you are allowing your body to get into better shape. If you can keep your body in good shape, your body is going to be able to better digest the food that it takes in, including fatty foods and other foods. Also, if you are in good shape, and if you exercise often, your body is going to keep your heart strong, which means that it is going to keep pumping at a nice, strong rate, and you are going to stay healthy.

Another important thing that you should keep in mind when it comes to heart disease is that you need to keep up a good diet. Foods that are high in fat, and foods that are not healthy for you are not going to be foods that benefit your heart. In fact, they are going to be foods that contribute to a greater possibility of heart disease.

Therefore, in order to keep heart disease at bay, you need to be exercising regularly and eating a good diet that is low in fat. This is always a good idea, but an especially good idea if you are looking at ways to prevent heart disease.

Smooth Heart Surgery

In some cases, heart disease will have progressed to the point where heart surgery needs to be done. This surgery can range from inserting heart stents to doing bypasses to full heart transplants. In the case you need surgery, you definitely want to make sure you get the best care possible. The success of your heart surgery does not necessarily lie only with the surgeon and the hospital staff—it also lies with you. By following the below tips, you can do your part to help make sure the surgery goes smoothly and your recovery is as fast and painless as possible.

The location where your surgery takes place is sometimes extremely important. It truly depends on the severity of your condition and the type of surgery you are having done. If you have a choice, find a hospital where the surgery you are having done has been performed many times. If they call the procedure “routine” you know that you have a better chance at good results. This is especially crucial for experimental kinds of surgeries. Make sure you get the best care possible.

Also, before you consent to any kind of surgery, make sure that you, your surgeon, and your other doctors all agree on the exact actions that will be taken. Ask why things are being done and how they will go about doing them. Ask if follow-up surgeries will be necessary and understand the steps that will be taken following the surgery. Make sure that a friend or family member will have the right to speak on your behalf should something go wrong. This might require additional paperwork. It is also important to sign a living will so that doctors know your wishes should something go wrong.

Ask a lot of questions. If you don't understand something, make sure it is explained to you again until you do understand it. Ask who will be in charge of your case following the surgery and make sure you release all of your information about your medical history to your doctors so that you receive the best care possible. Learn why things are being done and if the procedures are not absolutely necessary be sure that you explore other options as well. Doctors and nurses are not offended by second opinions, so get them—as well as third and fourths in some cases. With many people working to help you get better, your heart surgery will go more smoothly and you'll be rest assured that you are receiving the best care possible for your heart disease.

Stress Tests: No Cheat Sheets Allowed

Heart disease is a common problem in America and around the world. There are many reasons why your heart may not be working correctly. Some people are simply born with irregularities and genetic predisposition. Others don't get enough exercise. Still other people eat unhealthy foods that clog their arteries. No matter what the reason behind your heart problems, it is simply important to catch these diseases before more serious things, like heart attacks, can occur. One way in which doctors test the strength of your heart is with a stress test.

When you are at rest, your heart may not exhibit signs to doctors that there are any problems. A stress test puts you under stress and your heart has to perform at a higher standard. Abnormalities are then exhibited more readily. The stress test is used to first identify a problem and then to rate that problem's severity. Stress tests are performed under close supervision by a

medical professional, so they are quite safe, and they are the best way in many cases to test if anything is wrong with your heart.

To perform the stress test, a doctor first hooks his or her patient up to a ECG machine and blood pressure cuff. Sometimes, a device is attached to your finger as well to test for oxygen levels in the blood. You are monitored at rest for a number of minutes so that a doctor can see what is normal for your body. Remember, everyone is slightly different. By seeing what is normal in you, your doctor can notice even the smallest differences.

After obtaining a base for the test, the patient is asked to begin doing low levels of action. Usually, you are asked to either walk on a treadmill or pedal a stationary bike slowly. Every three minutes, the level of exercise is raised, while your doctor watches how your body reacts. This continues until the patient is either too tired to go on or has symptoms like chest pain that prevent the test from going any farther. Sometimes, however, the ECG machine will show that there is a problem with the heart even before this fatigued level is reached.

Stress tests are usually used to indicate coronary artery disease, but may be used for other types of heart disease as well. They are not by any means 100% accurate, but are used to rule out heart disease if a patient is having problems. If you are experiencing symptoms of heart disease, ask your doctor if a stress test might help you diagnose the problem.

Thyroid Disease and Your Heart

The thyroid is a small gland found in your neck. Even though this organ is relatively small, it is responsible for some of your body's most important daily needs. The thyroid produces a hormone in order to control your metabolism, digestive and muscle functions, and skin health. Without your thyroid, you would need extensive medication to stay healthy. For some people, this is what they must rely on. A variety of thyroid disease can cause your thyroid to produce too much or too little of its hormone. Unfortunately, if you are at risk for developing heart disease or have had heart disease in the past, thyroid problems could worsen your conditions. It is important to learn all you can about how thyroid disease affects your heart's health in order to prevent complications whenever possible.

There are two main problems that you could experience regarding your thyroid gland. First, with hypothyroidism, your thyroid gland does not produce enough hormone. When not enough is present in the body, a number of things can go wrong. With your heart, the muscles that pump the blood are weakened and so the amount of blood that reaches your body is reduced. The heart muscle also does not relax normally between beats. Hypothyroidism can cause problems with your blood vessels. With not enough of the thyroid's hormone, they will stiffen from a lack of nitric oxide.

The other common problem with the thyroid gland is over production of the hormone, or hyperthyroidism. In this condition, the heart beats at an increased rate. It may not cause problems in someone who is healthy, but this is very dangerous if you are already dealing with

one of the many kinds of heart disease. If your heart is continually overworked, you could experience heart failure, or a heart attack.

Both of these conditions are extremely serious for heart disease patients. Therefore, it is crucial that the health of your thyroid gland be checked regularly. If your doctor is not doing so, ask that it be done, especially if you are experiencing other symptoms of hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism. Once you have been diagnosed, it is extremely important to follow your doctor's instructions. That means you must take your medications when and how they are prescribed. It is also important to receive regular checkups to make sure that all of the organs in your body, including your heart and thyroid, are working as well as possible.

Tiny Tots and Healthy Hearts

The idea of any disease in children is something that a parent fears. You never want to see your child hurting, and you never want your child to be sick. In fact, a parent's worst nightmare might be that their child falls ill with something and there is nothing that he or she can do about it.

When you think about heart disease especially, you think mostly of older people who have led long lives where they might not have exercised properly and they might have had a bad diet. However, heart disease, like many other sicknesses, can happen to children as well, and when it does it might be very devastating to you and to your family. It is certainly nothing that you would ever want your children to have to go through, and it is something that can damage your life and your child's life for a long time to come.

Most of the heart disease found in children has nothing to do with the food that they eat or the exercise that they get, as is the case for most adults. Most of the heart disease that happens in young children especially is because it is a genetic disease that has been with them since birth. There are many kinds of heart disease. Many of them will make a child's heart have irregular beats. This might cause anything from shortness of breath to mini heart attacks that the child has to go through. All of these things can be traumatic for a child, so it is best if you have your doctor who is going to be able to help you through this process.

Most of the heart disease in children, if caught early, can be corrected by surgery or with medication. However, there are some types of heart disease that must only be treated by heart transplants, and these are very scary cases because you never know how long your child is going to be alive. In these cases, the survival rate is not as good when a child must have his or her heart transplanted.

Even though most heart disease in children is because of genetic links, there are certain types of heart disease that can develop because of a child's lack of exercise or poor diet. In order to help your child be as healthy as possible, and to avoid any instances of any kinds of sickness, you should make sure that your child has a good diet and gets a proper amount of exercise. These

things are very important so that you can help your child live the life that they deserve to be living.

Valve Problems: Valvular Heart Disease

The human body is an intricate piece of machinery. One of the main components of our bodies is the heart. Within the heart alone there are a number of parts that must all work together to create a working organ. When things go wrong with the heart, we call the illness heart disease, and because so many things can go wrong, there are special names for each type of heart disease. The valves are one part of your heart, and when something goes wrong with them, the result is valvular heart disease. By learning about valvular heart disease, you can prevent and treat it more effectively.

Valvular heart disease manifest itself in two main ways—stenosis and regurgitation. Valvular stenosis occurs when the valve has an opening that has become too narrow for the blood to flow through nicely. Valves are how your blood gets in and out of your heart, so this is a major problem. Imagine trying to push all of the water from a garden hose through a straw—it's just too much to take and the water will back up. The same happens in your heart. The blood dams up behind the valve while waiting to be pumped through and the result is an increase in pressure in the heart's chambers. Too much blood is a bad thing, basically!

The second kind of valvular heart disease, regurgitation, happens when the valves simply do not work well. Your valves open and close on a regulated system, and sometimes they simply get out of sync or otherwise do not open and close correctly. The blood then washes back into the heart's chambers. Not enough blood is then pumped to the right place.

Both of these conditions cause your heart to have to work extra hard to keep your body running, and over time the heart is weakened. There are four main valves in the heart where these problems can manifest—the aortic valve, which separates the aorta from the left ventricle; the pulmonic valve, which separates the right ventricle from the pulmonary artery; the mitral valve, which separates the left atrium and ventricle; and the tricuspid valve, which separates the right atrium and ventricle. Valvular heart disease will show up as a murrmur when our doctor listens to your heart and can be diagnosed and treated from there. Ask your doctor for more information about valvular heart disease and treatment options.

What are Pacemakers?

Pacemakers are probably not something that you have given a lot of thought to, especially if you have never had to use one, or you have never known anyone who has had to have a pacemaker installed in their body. However, a pacemaker is something that a lot of people might need during their lives, and it can be something that can mean the difference between life and death for many people, so it is something that you should know a little bit about.

Most people who have never heard of a pacemaker, or who have heard of one but haven't heard what it does, might be wondering what exactly a pacemaker is. A pacemaker is something that is inserted into your body and acts kind of like a shield for your heart. It monitors the rate that your heart is beating at, and whether or not it is beating regularly. If your heart is not working correctly, the pacemaker will give it a small jolt of electricity, which will kind of shock it back into beating correctly.

Because of what a pacemaker is, it is something that must be surgically inserted into a person, and it is probably something that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. It doesn't have to do anything if your heart is working correctly, so it doesn't do anything at all unless your heart begins to beat erratically, or stops beating. In these cases, you will receive a jolt of electricity, which should get your heart beating on its own and correctly again.

There are many people who might need a pacemaker during their lives. If a person has a weak heart, or one that has been damaged by a disease or a heart attack, a pacemaker might make sure that they are getting the best chance at living their lives fully. Because it acts like a doctor and is constantly monitoring your heart, you are going to know that something is always going to be making sure that your heart is beating right, and if it does not beat correctly, it will be fixed. A pacemaker can usually be put into someone with only minimal surgery, and it does its job well for several years before it stops working. If you think that a pacemaker might be a good idea for you, you should check with your doctor to make sure that it is something that is a good idea before you decide to have one in your body.

What is Atrial Fibrillation?

When thinking about heart disease, they think about clogged arteries and junk food. However, heart disease can have other faces as well. One very common type of heart disease is atrial fibrillation. This rhythmic disturbance is not life threatening, but it can be very frustrating for patients. Do you have atrial fibrillation? If so, learn all you can about this disease so that you know how to best treat it.

When a person has atrial fibrillation, their ventricles are impulsed irregularly by the atria of the heart. This causes the heart to beat faster than normal and irregularly, with no coordination between the atria and ventricles. This is caused in some cases by things such as cardiac surgery, alcohol consumption, coronary artery disease, and other types of heart disease. In most patients, unfortunately, this is not the case, and there are no known reasons for the irregularly beating heart. The term for this is idiopathic.

Because the causes are unknown, some people do not even realize that they have atrial fibrillation. Symptoms are easily misdiagnosed and can include being able to feel your heart beating, becoming tired easily, shortness of breath, and lightheadedness. Usually these symptoms do not affect a person enough to disrupt daily life. For some people, it becomes a huge problem. If the heart jumps into this irregular beating pattern for a long period of time, blood clots can form. Blood clots that break off and travel through the blood vessels can cause a person to have a stroke.

Treating atrial fibrillation is tricky, because of the risk of stroke. For most people, medications will help can the heart beating normally. If it begins beating too quickly or irregularly for a long period of time, a doctor can administer a slight electrical shock to a patient in a hospital setting to get the heart back on track. This is relatively safe and can save a person's life. However, it is not convenient. The drugs used to stop the irregular beating are extremely toxic and usually cannot fully help a person maintain a regular heartbeat. Therefore, most people simple choose to live with the atrial fibrillation. Medications can help control the symptoms, and doctors can suggest steps for preventing stroke.

Scientists are doing research on atrial fibrillation every day. Although we do not yet have a great method of treating and curing it, the future looks bright. If you want to know more about this condition and how it can be prevented and treated, talk to a medical professional today.

What to do if You are having a Heart Attack

Heart disease is common in America, and many patients with heart disease do not even know that they are at risk. When heart disease goes unchecked, a heart attack can happen. If you know you have heart disease, and get regular check ups for your condition, you may still have a heart attack. If you are at risk, or if you know someone who is at risk, you should learn what to do in the case of a heart attack. Knowing how to take care of things can save your life or the lives of others, so it is important to learn about heart attacks and what to do. Knowledge is sometimes the only power you have to save lives.

First, try to stay as calm as possible. When you are excited, your heart begins to race. If you are having a heart attack, a racing heart on top of everything else is very bad. Take some deep breaths and try to think clearly. The same applies for you if you are watching someone have a heart attack. If you don't stay calm, you could go into shock, and the paramedics will then have two victims to treat. Focus on your breathing and try to stay calm.

Call for help immediately. If the situation seems like an emergency, call 9-1-1 without hesitation. If you are simply feelings strangely, call your doctor and ask what you should do. If you are not sure whom to call, 9-1-1 is your best options. Better safe than sorry. If you are having a massive heart attack and cannot talk, still dial the phone. If no one answers, 9-1-1 emergency vehicles will quickly track your call and respond. They will be at your house as quickly as possible.

Take an aspirin if you can, unless your doctor has specifically told you not to. Aspirin helps in the event of a heart attack, and has saved a number of lives. It won't stop the heart attack from happening, but it will give you more time before total heart failure. It can help you while you are waiting for the ambulance. Keep your aspirin in an easy-to-find location in the event of a heart attack.

Also, keep your insurance information and a list of your medications on you at all times. This is very important when you get to the hospital. If you are given medications to which you are allergic or which has a negative effect when mixed with a medication you are already taking, you may help doctors save your life by carrying this information.

What Your Doctor Can do for You

If you have heart disease the most important thing you can do to stay happy and healthy is to see your doctor regularly. A doctor can make sure that you are diagnosed properly, that your medication is adjusted to the right amounts, and that you are doing everything you can to heal your heart once again. Therefore, a doctor is an extremely important person to have on your side in the battle against heart disease. When choosing a doctor, it is important to pick someone who will have your best interest at heart (no pun intended!).

First, it is important to find a doctor whom you feel comfortable seeing. Remember that your heart disease isn't going to go away overnight, even with medications and proper diet and exercise. Most likely, you'll have to deal with heart disease for your entire life. You'll be seeing a doctor every few months if your condition is serious and at least once a year otherwise, so look for someone that makes you feel comfortable. You might wish to have a doctor who is the same sex as you. You might wish to have a doctor of a certain age. Voice your concerns if you belong to a group with many doctors, and they should be able to help you find a doctor good for your situation.

Also make sure that you find a doctor who is knowledgeable about your condition. Doctors usually specialize in one area of the body or another, so if your condition is serious, don't settle for checkups from a family doctor. They might not notice differences, which could be lethal. Instead, look for a doctor who specializes in working with heart disease patients.

Finally, look for a doctor who will be available to you. In larger cities, some doctors pride themselves with going through dozens of patients every single day. This is great if you simply need a physical of some sort—but when you need specialized care, this kind of doctor will probably not have enough time to thoroughly check your condition. When a doctor is rushed, mistakes are made. It may be a bit pricier, but find a doctor who sees fewer patients every day, and you'll be more likely to spot problems before they happen. This doctor will also be available to take your call and discuss your worries no matter if you had a scheduled appointment or not.



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