

## **Can Lifestyle Choices Reduce your Risk of Coronary Heart Disease?**

“Dear Lynda

Your article on longevity was interesting but I think that death from a heart attack is the most common reason for sudden death in this country. Are there lifestyle choices that can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease? Ben.”

The British Heart Foundation reports that every year 231,000 Britons suffer a heart attack which equates to one every 2 minutes these are worrying statistics. Coronary Heart Disease is the major cause of death in the UK and the USA. Although heart disease is strongly linked to a genetic predisposition we can help protect ourselves from this disease with lifestyle changes. It is worth building good habits of eating healthily, exercising, and learning to relax, which all help strengthen the coronary arteries. The following are my recommendations to help prevent heart disease.

### **1. Stop Smoking**

This is of major importance for the health of your heart and is the one thing you can do that will have an enormous positive impact on your overall health. The chemicals in tobacco are very damaging to the cardiovascular system.

### **1. Avoid or Control High Blood Pressure**

High blood pressure causes the walls of the larger arteries to lose their elasticity and become rigid and smaller vessels to constrict; this means the heart has to work much harder. Have a blood pressure check regularly many people are not aware that they have high blood pressure and it can be controlled with lifestyles changes or medication.

### **3. Aerobic Exercise**

Aerobic activity of at least thirty minutes five days a week will greatly improve the efficiency of the heart as a pump, tone the entire arterial system, reduce bad cholesterol, reduce the chance of abnormal blood clotting and help balance the activity of the autonomic nervous system. People who do not exercise regularly more than double their risk of heart disease.

### **2. Reduce LDL Cholesterol (the bad cholesterol)**

High cholesterol is an important predictor of a heart attack, because it leads to fatty deposits building up in the walls of the coronary arteries, a condition known as atherosclerosis. As I have mentioned before it is important to choose the right type of fat in your diet for example olive oil and fish oils which are so beneficial to the heart. I recommend a good quality Omega-3 supplement which you can buy from my website. A study of 1,300 men in Europe found that those with the highest levels of omega-3 essential fatty acids in their tissues had the lowest heart attack rates.

### **3. Learn to Relax**

Stress is bad for your health it can increase the activity of the adrenal glands and sympathetic nervous system which causes the heart to work harder and increases the risk of arrhythmias and coronary artery spasm. Learning to relax reduces the risk of heart attack and also reduces the risk of sudden death if you are unfortunate enough to experience a heart attack. Learning to calm the body and mind with some form of meditation can be one of the best ways of learning to relax.

### **4. Do not become overweight**

If you are obese you are increasing the heart's workload and putting a strain on all the organs of the body and your joints. Being overweight also increases your risk of Type 2 Diabetes which is bad for the heart as raised blood sugar levels cause plaques to form in the coronary arteries. You should aim to keep your weight within a safe range; this will help reduce your risk of coronary heart disease. If you are overweight and would like some help please contact me. Live with joy and health.

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