

Hope & Healing

Heart Attack Prevention

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

Introduction _____

About 250,000 Americans die each year from heart attacks that could have been prevented. Hundreds of thousands of other Americans are rushed to hospital emergency departments because of heart attacks. Heart attacks change life in an unforgettable way.

Most patients who survive the first few hours will be able to return home within 10 days, and will wish to prevent another heart attack if possible. Prevention, then, is a topic of importance to people who are at risk for developing a heart attack, as well as for those who have had a heart attack.

How Heart Attacks Happen _____

You know how it is. You play a little basketball with your kids and call it exercise. You have your blood pressure checked during your "annual" physical (which was three years ago), and are dimly aware that it runs a little high. You choose to ignore it, hoping the problem will go away. You make resolution after resolution about losing that extra 30 pounds and about watching your salt, but "you know how hard it is to get started on a diet."

Before you know it you are fat, fifty, out of shape and pinned to a bed in the coronary care unit, with electrodes on your chest, sweating your way through a heart attack, filled with regret.

What Causes Heart Attacks _____

There are eight basic causes of the common type of heart attack:

1. Cigarette smoking
2. Inactivity

3. High blood cholesterol
4. High blood pressure
5. Being overweight
6. Handling stress inadequately
7. A family history of heart disease
8. Diabetes

When there is more than one cause in the same person, the consequences increase sharply. A person who smokes and is overweight and has high blood pressure has a much greater risk than a person who has only one risk factor. Now, as we get down to a specific plan to prevent heart attacks, what questions do we need to ask?

1. Do I really want to do this?

Changing habits isn't easy. But, when we're talking about preventing a heart attack, it's pay now or pay later. And if you elect to pay later, the price is a lot higher.

2. What's it going to cost me?

Changing from bad health habits to better ones has many benefits and several drawbacks.

The Benefits are:

- You will be healthier.
- You will have more energy.
- You will look better to the opposite sex.

The Drawbacks:

- It causes pain sometimes.
- You will be tired at times.
- Some of it may be boring.
- You can get hungry.
- You will need to stick with it.

Take Charge of Your Habits _____

Developing a lifestyle plan is like driving to town. There's more than one road to take.

There are books, self-help groups, professional help, or you may go it alone. No matter which route you choose, be certain it makes sense and you feel

comfortable with the people involved.

Here is a seven step plan to get control of your habits:

- Study how and why you do things.
- Change the things that you do that are harmful.
- Think healthy thoughts and develop healthy attitudes.
- Get your family involved.
- Plan to make the changes stay with you and you stay with them.
- Begin the plan.
- Pause to see if the plan is working and to make adjustments.

The First Step: Forming Good Habits _____

Habits are programmed, automatic responses to people, things, situations, thoughts and feelings. When these automatic responses are destructive, you must change your habits to change your life. It's as simple as that.

Take eating and exercise. Let's say that the net result of your eating and exercise is a gain of one pound per month and it goes on for five years. 12 pounds, five years — 60 pounds — that sneaked up on you so, what happened?

You're a fish swimming in an ocean of food and the food advertisers are screaming to you to eat. How can you break free from these chains that bind you to addictive behavior with food that's killing you?

You have to desire to become addictive to something else — to living foods — foods that will help you regain your health.

The answer lies in your inner mind. It has the power to create and direct constructive change — you need only let go the old habits and pick up new ones. To get started, let's begin with a habit diary — to keep a journal of your successes.

What the Habit Diary Can Do For You _____

The habit diary can be used to help you change eating habits, begin an exercise program, handle stress, and quit cigarette smoking. It teaches us what our patterns are, motivates us to change, measures our habits at the moment, and can be used to show how we are improving.

The Second Step: Begin to Change Things _____

Begin shopping from a list. Buy foods that have 30% fat or less. Don't shop for food when you're hungry. Avoid situations where you will eat more than you should. Keep problem food out of sight. Make your new habits into a system, a sensible system to follow. Next, we'll see how thoughts and attitudes can keep things going.

The Third Step: Our Attitudes Make Us _____

How we think determines how we feel and how we act. Your mind is either your greatest ally or your worst enemy. There really is something to positive thinking. Think that you are going to fail and you will. On the other hand, negative thoughts can be replaced with positive thoughts that tell you that you can and will do it.

The Fourth Step: Get Your Family Involved _____

One thing will predict your success in

preventing a heart attack: getting your family involved in healthy eating and in an exercise program. A remarkable study was started years ago in Alameda County, California. It showed that smokers and those who ate unhealthy diets died at younger ages than non-smokers and those with healthy diets and an exercise plan. The Alameda study also showed that married people, people with close friends and neighbors, lived longer and had better health than those who had little social support.

The Fifth Step: Making It Permanent _____

Change is not easy. Here are two ways to make your eating and exercise habits permanent:

1. Establish thresholds. If you have lost from 140 pounds to 118 pounds, for example, make an agreement with yourself that you will never allow your weight to get above 123 pounds. If it gets to 123 pounds you must take corrective action so that you won't lose the progress you've made.
2. Don't let circumstances in your life cause you to backslide.

The Sixth Step: Get Started _____

The time to act is now; don't procrastinate.

The Seventh Step: Pause _____

See if your plan is working. Make adjustments.

Summary _____

The basic causes of a heart attack are straightforward. It is far better to prevent a heart attack than to have one and recover in regret. The steps to prevention are well stated. But, they do require action on your part.

Awaken the Miracles Within You

The Miracle of Problems and Opportunities

We are at a pivotal point in world history and major problems confront us.

We hear that we are a nation in decline. We've heard it before.

If life was altogether peaceful and uneventful it would mean that all our work was done.

Undoubtedly the years ahead will contain great problems and dangers.

We can do it if we stay true to the American Dream and united in the essentials of living free and also living a destiny of service.

Difficulties and problems call for energy and vision, and, as well, create new opportunities for imaginative solutions. We'll be OK if we face the times with calm assurance and take advantage of the opportunities.

The recommendations and information in this handout are appropriate in most cases. However, for specific information concerning your personal medical condition, please, consult your doctor.