

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

WINTER 2006

Take Wellness to Heart

Women need to recognize the risks and symptoms of heart disease

Ask a roomful of women about their biggest health threat, and you're more likely to hear "breast cancer" than "heart disease."

In fact, coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death for American women. Nearly twice as many women die of heart disease and stroke as from all forms of cancer, including breast cancer.

Heed the Warning

Women are less likely to think they are having a heart attack, so they might not seek

help right away. A heart attack often sends warning signals such as uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest lasting more than a few minutes.

You may have pain spreading to the shoulders, neck or arms, or chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.



Other less common warning signs include atypical abdominal, chest or stomach pain; nausea or dizziness; shortness of breath and difficulty breathing; unexplained anxiety, weakness or fatigue; and palpitations, cold sweats or paleness.

Not all symptoms occur in every attack, so it's important to pay attention to the ones you have. If you or someone you love notices these warning signs, call 9-1-1 right away. ●

Don't Risk It

You can't control all the risk factors for heart disease, but you can alter your lifestyle to treat, change or modify these risk factors:

- **Cigarette smoking.** It's the biggest risk factor for women. Seek help to quit and minimize exposure to secondhand smoke.
- **High cholesterol.** To lower your cholesterol, eat less saturated fat and cholesterol and control your weight.
- **High blood pressure.** Get your blood pressure checked, and follow your physician's treatment plan if it is high.
- **Physical inactivity.** Regular exercise can help control other risk factors—including obesity, high cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure.



Euclid
Hillcrest
Huron
South Pointe

Need a physician? Call Medline for a referral at 440/312-4533 or 800/621-0004.

Get the Most from Medicare

No one likes to throw away money, especially if they're on a tight budget. According to the Administration on Aging, Social Security benefits constitute 90 percent of income for one-third of Americans over age 65.

To stay on top of a tight budget and avoid spending money needlessly, be sure to enroll in Medicare's new prescription plan before May 15, 2006. If you currently have Medicare Part A and/or

Part B, you can now join the new prescription drug plan. Those who miss the May 15 deadline and do not have a prescription plan that covers as much as or more than a Medicare prescription drug plan will have to pay more each month if they enroll after the deadline.



To find out how to save money and choose a plan that best meets your needs, visit medicare.gov or call **800/MEDICARE (800/633-4227)**. ●



Let It Snow!

Shoveling snow is great exercise, but it's also dangerous if not done properly. Here are a few tips to follow before heading outdoors:

- Get a physical and get your doctor's consent before winter is in full swing.
- Make sure to loosen up your muscles by stretching.
- Wear gloves, a hat, a scarf and face protection. Keep dry, since

wet clothing loses 90 percent of its insulating value.

- Use a lightweight shovel that suits your body size.
- Wear waterproof boots with treads, and watch for ice.
- Avoid back strain by pushing the snow. If you must lift it, don't pick up too much at once. Bend your knees and lift with your legs.
- Pace yourself, and watch for heart attack warning signs, since shoveling snow may cause a quick increase in heart rate and blood pressure.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.

For additional winter-safety tips, from what items to pack in your car trunk to how to prevent Christmas tree fires, visit the National Safety Council at nsc.org. ●

The Greater Cleveland YMCA Joins the Circle!

Get membership discounts and enjoy free water aerobics. Visit ymcacleland.org to find the location nearest you or call **216/566-YMCA (9622)**.

Chart Your Health

Take control of your health care by keeping track of your health history

If you can't remember what medications you took five years ago or the doctors who prescribed them, then keeping a record of your health might be one of the best things you can do to stay healthy.

A record of your health history will help you and your physicians—especially in cases of emergency. With a record of past conditions, surgeries, screenings and more available at your fingertips, your physician will be able to spend valuable time focusing on your current ailments and needs.

Building the Bigger Picture

A health history is a written record that provides an overview of your health. It should include a list of your allergies, medications and family diseases. (For more, see “Leaving a Legacy.”) If you're seeing a new physician, the history could help save time and prevent a repeat of treatments you've already had.

This written document also is a valuable resource for your family. According to the Alzheimer's Association, individuals who have a parent or sibling with Alzheimer's



Leaving a Legacy

Take time to gather your health history today. For starters, be sure to include your:

- health care providers and their phone numbers
- emergency contacts
- medical insurance company and ID number
- blood type
- allergies (i.e. drugs, foods, insects)
- health conditions (i.e. diabetes, arthritis)
- current and past medications
- dates of past surgeries and hospitalizations
- test dates and results (i.e. cholesterol, weight)
- cancer screening dates and results (i.e. mammogram, colonoscopy)
- immunizations (i.e. tetanus, flu)

are two to three times more likely to develop the disease than those who do not. Women with a mother or sister who has had breast cancer are more likely to develop the disease themselves, according to the American Cancer Society. By knowing the risks, future generations can take preventive steps to reduce their chances of developing specific conditions, and seek appropriate screenings to catch diseases at earlier stages.

Write It Down

How you track your history is up to you. Keep handwritten notes in a three-ring binder or in a computer file. Just make sure your history is easily accessible in the event of an emergency. Also include a section to note things such

as your eating and sleeping habits. This information could prove useful in spotting trends.

The Cleveland Clinic and the Cleveland Clinic Health System (CCHS) are at the forefront of offering an electronic medical record for all patients. Currently, patients at The Cleveland Clinic have access to MyChart, a secure Internet-based service that connects them to portions of their medical record. Patients at CCHS hospitals soon will have similar access. For details, including a demo of MyChart, visit clevelandclinic.org/mychartinfo. ●

Getting Started For free printable charts, visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality at ahrq.gov/ppip/50plus/50charts.htm.



Live Well

A Harvard Medical School study reports that a healthy lifestyle can reduce a woman's risk of heart disease by 80 percent.

Tea Helps Your Ticker

Heat disease is less common in Japan, and researchers from the East are sharing their secret. A recent report in the *American Journal of Cardiology* suggests that drinking green tea every day may help prevent heart attacks.

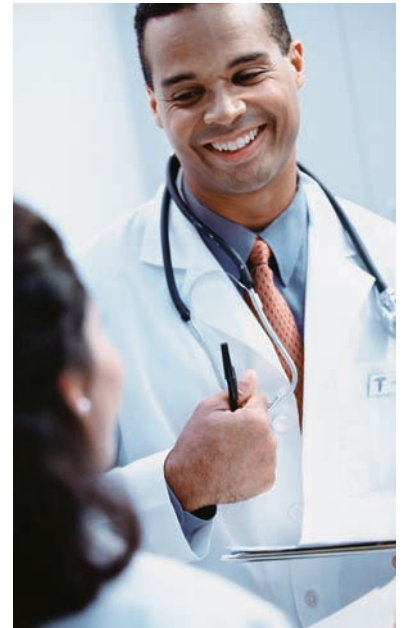
The popular Japanese drink is loaded with flavonoids—the same

plant compound found in fruits, vegetables and red wine—and is said to combat oxidation, a cell-damaging process that increases the risk of heart disease.

So drink up for a healthier heart! Want more heart-healthy tips? Visit heartinfo.org for helpful patient guides. ●

Heart Check

Take your wellness to heart by scheduling an appointment with your primary care physician. Need help finding a doctor? Call Medline, our free physician referral service, at **440/312-4533**. We'll even make your first appointment for you.



Tell Us! Do you have a story to share about an experience or staff member at one of our hospitals? Write to *Senior Circle Plus* at Hillcrest Medical Building 1, 6803 Mayfield Road, #500, Mayfield Heights, OH 44124.

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