

GeneScene

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Lower your risk for heart disease

Did you know...

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States.
- The 2008 estimated cost of CHD is \$156.4 Billion.
- About 47% of cardiac deaths occur before emergency services or transport to a hospital.
- In every year since 1900, except 1918, CHD caused more deaths than any other single cause or group of causes in the United States.
- Famous people with CHD:
Dick Cheney
Elizabeth Taylor
Bill Clinton



Coronary Heart disease (CHD) kills more people each year than cancer, diabetes, accidents, flu and pneumonia put together. Many risk factors are known to cause CHD. Family history is an important

one. Other risk factors are stress, high blood pressure (HBP), high cholesterol, diabetes, stroke and being overweight. CHD results from lifestyle factors, environment and genes.

New Year's Eve is coming up. You may want to think about making a New Year's Resolution to lower your risk for heart disease. In one poll, the top 10 New Year's Resolutions were all associated with lowering your risk for heart disease. The resolutions fall into one of three groups — lifestyle, environment, and genetics.

Lifestyle:

1. "Fit in" fitness
2. Tame the bulge

3. Quit smoking

4. Quit drinking

If you smoke, have HBP, high cholesterol, diabetes, a history of stroke or if you are overweight your risk for CHD is higher.

Obesity, diabetes and high cholesterol can make your blood vessels

smaller. Smoking can raise your blood pressure and lower your ability to exercise. HBP can hurt the blood vessels and organs. Smaller or injured blood vessels make the heart work harder to pump the blood to your body. By changing your lifestyle habits you can lower your chance for getting heart disease.

Environment:

5. Enjoy life more
6. Get out of debt
7. Help others
8. Get organized
9. Learn something new

Worldwide, coronary heart disease (CHD) kills more than 7 million people each year.

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Lower your risk for heart disease (continued)

Stress can sometimes lead to poor lifestyle behaviors. If you are stressed, your blood pressure may go up, you may eat more, exercise less, and you may be more likely to smoke. When you are stressed, your body makes stress hormones called adrenaline and cortisol.



These hormones can make it more likely that you will have a heart attack. Lowering your stress level can help you lower your risk for heart disease.

Genetics:

10. Spend more time with family (and friends).

Spend some time with your family members and talk about the diseases that run in the family. About 1 in 2 men and 1 in 3 women will die of CHD. If you have a first-degree family member (mother, father, siblings) with CHD before age 60 you are 2 to 3 times more likely to get heart disease. Your risk for heart disease is higher if you have:

- one or more first-degree family members with CHD after age 60,

- two or more second-degree relatives (aunt, uncle, grandparent) with CHD after age 60, or
- two or more first- and second-degree family members with CHD at any age.

Talk to your family about their history of CHD. Find out who in the family has CHD or symptoms of CHD. As you gather this information, write it down. Once you have collected your family's health history of CHD, share it with your doctor. This may affect your doctor's advice about when you should start screening for heart disease. It could also affect the type of medicine your doctor orders if you have symptoms of CHD, like HBP or high cholesterol. Your family's health history could change the type of treatment your doctor gives if you begin to have symptoms of a heart attack or stroke.

Once you have collected your family health history, talk to your friends. Tell them how important it is for them to learn about the diseases that run in their family.

This year, make a New Year's Resolution to lower your risk for heart disease. Even if you have a family history, there are things you can do to make your chance of living a long and healthy life more likely.



On the Web...

The Genomedical Connection
www.genomedical.com

American Heart Association
www.americanheart.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm