

## Did you know?

- After menopause the risk of developing heart disease increases. It is important to ask your doctor for a regular check up, as it may not be offered to you. If you take HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) check with your doctor regarding the need to continue as HRT may increase your risk of heart disease.

- Severe sodium restriction might not be advisable. There's evidence that salt intake lower than 1.5 g a day increases the risk of a heart attack in people with high blood pressure.

## World Heart Day

Special on World Heart Day today

# Heart disease most serious health threat for women

This year's World Heart Day is dedicated to helping women understand their most serious health threat



Under the slogan: "A Heart for Life", member organisations in over 90 countries including Bangladesh Cardiac Society (BCS) will organise events on World Heart Day, including health checks, stage shows, public talks, meetings with politicians, scientific forums, exhibitions and concerts, carnivals, walks and sports tournaments.

It's important for women to adopt a healthy lifestyle as early as possible in their lives.

The World Heart Federation's advice will help women to keep their hearts healthy:

Make exercise a part of your life. Thirty minutes of physical activity each day is ideal, such as walking, gardening or cycling. Between 60 and 85 per cent of women are not physically active enough to gain health benefits.

Maintain a healthy weight through a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruit and vegetables and a variety of whole grain products. It's better to substitute animal fats (butter, etc...) with soft margarine and monounsaturated oils (olive or canola), or polyunsaturated oils (corn or sunflower), and to limit fried



food, fatty meats and salt intake. Avoid passive smoking and if you smoke, stop. Avoid the combination of smoking and the pill. If you take an oral contraceptive and smoke up to 15 cigarettes a day you are five times more likely to develop heart disease. If you smoke more than 15 cigarettes a day the risk is 20 times higher.

<http://www.worldheartday.com>

## Bangladesh scenario on heart diseases

# Four adults in every hundred population suffer heart disease

### STAR HEALTH DESK

Professor (Brig retired) A Malik, president of Bangladesh Cardiac Society (BCS) put emphasis on health education at all levels including teachers, parents and students to launch a massive awareness programme on the prevention of the disease. "Prevention is simple and easy but we are simply not aware of some simple tips which can avoid the diseases," said Prof Malik. He also told the Star Health that women in Bangladesh are most ignorant about their health and they mostly suffer from hypertension, which is even worse. "Peo-

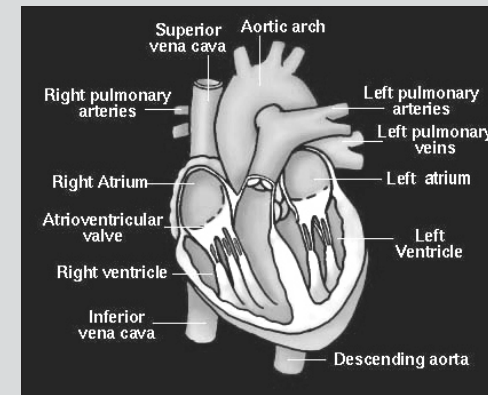
ple go for costly investigations after being attacked or suffering heart pains but regular check up and control on diets can easily avoid the ailments."

Professor A K M Mohibullah, Secretary General of BCS now teaching and officially practicing at the Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital told the Star Health that Bangladesh is not free from a possible global epidemic of the coronary artery disease (CAD), one of the major causes of heart attacks, by 2020. Referring to a World Health Organisation forecast on the increasing global problem at last years World Congress on Cardiology in Australia he said, "There would be an epi-

dem of CAD world-wide and Bangladesh is not free from it since people are not aware of diets rich in fats and lifestyle."

He also said that heart disease in Bangladesh is increasing. A 1976 study by BCS showed 2.8 per cent incidence of the disease among the general population (study size of population 7,600) and in 1985 similar study by the same organisation showed 4.1 per cent incidence (study size of population 4,500). "Since 1985 we have had no population based study but it is an indication that heart disease would be number one non-communicable disease burden in Bangladesh."

## The heart



Your heart, quite simply, is a pump. But it is one of the most fascinating pumps you'll ever learn about. First you must understand that every cell in our body - from the cells in our hair to the cells in our toes need OXYGEN and NUTRIENTS to survive and keep us alive. Since they can't get these nutrients themselves, blood is used to

It beats day and night every day of our lives, but what does the heart really do for us?

deliver them right to the cells. (sort of like room service)

The basic job of the heart is pumps that blood through your body so that the blood can deliver the oxygen and nutrients right to the cells. The heart keeps your blood pumping at all times as it picks up oxygen from your lungs and nutrients from your digestive system and sends them to all cells of your body. Your heart is the power behind the delivery system.

Inside the heart is four chambers. Two of those chambers send the blood up to your lungs to get oxygen, then the other two chambers send that oxygen rich blood to the rest of your body. Valves inside of the heart make sure that the blood only moves in one direction.

The younger you are, the faster your heart beats. A baby's heart beats about 90 times a minute. A twelve year old heart beats about 78 times a minute and an adult heart beats about 70 times a minute. Of course the more active you are, the more your heart beats, since the cells need oxygen faster to keep you moving.

## Health of women's hearts seriously neglected

The World Heart Federation, an NGO dedicated to the prevention of heart disease and stroke, observing the World Heart Day, Sunday 28th September 2003 warns of serious negligence of women's health particularly on cardiac diseases.

Jane Seymour, award winning actress, mother and World Heart Federation Goodwill Ambassador is supporting World Heart Day. "Women are the heart of their families but are neglecting their own hearts," she said in a message ahead of the Day being observed in over 90 countries today.

"The good news is that small changes in lifestyles can bring big rewards and help us all to live life to its fullest," said Jane.

Each year, over eight million women worldwide die from heart disease or stroke, the highest cause of death amongst women. This is almost eighteen times

higher than from breast cancer and six times more than HIV/AIDS related deaths. In developing countries, half of all deaths of women over 50 are due to heart disease and stroke.

There is no doubt that women with heart disease are under-treated. For example, a smaller number of women than men with chronic heart disease are treated with angioplasty and coronary artery bypass surgery. And according to new findings, nearly six in ten physicians believe men are more likely to die from stroke, whereas more women die from stroke (11 per cent) than men (8.5 per cent)

"It's time for every woman to take charge of her health and to stop underestimating the risks," said Professor Poole-Wilson, President, World Heart Federation. "This year's World Heart Day is dedicated to helping women understand their most serious health threat. More than half of female deaths and disability from heart disease and stroke could be cut through a combination of simple, cost effective national efforts and by women themselves to reduce major risk factors such as smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity," said Professor Poole-Wilson.

## Do you have stiffness and difficulty in bending?

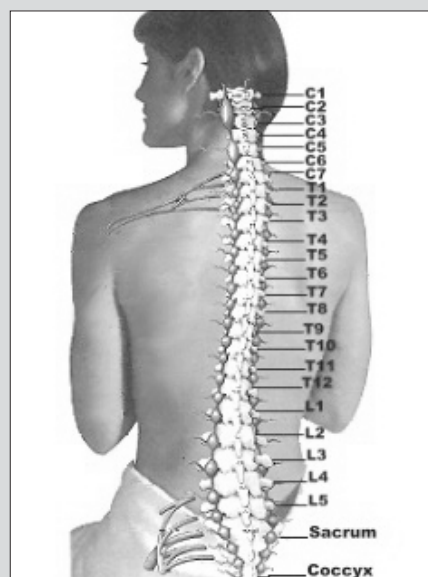
### Check out this week's health tips on back pain

Back pain is one of the commonest problems to affect people and is responsible for many days lost from work. Most commonly the pain is caused by minor damage to the ligaments and muscles in the back. This may occur from sitting or standing in the wrong position, straining the muscles when lifting or twisting, or from being overweight. Less often back pain is caused by a 'slipped disc', or disease in the spine itself such as arthritis.

A sharp pain may appear in a localised area or more commonly be felt as a generalised ache in the lower back and buttocks. There may be back stiffness and difficulty bending.

Pain may radiate down the back of the leg to the foot and be accompanied by numbness or tingling when a disc prolapses and puts pressure on the nerves causing sciatica.

Back pain that is associated with weight loss or difficulty controlling bowel or bladder function may be caused by a



serious disorder and immediate medical advice should be sought.

Four out of 5 people suffer back pain some time in their lives. It is more common if someone is overweight or if they sit bending for long periods of time. Although back pain can occur at any age the peak time is between the ages of 45-59 years old. Men and women tend to be affected equally.

Learn to lift correctly, avoid being overweight, maintain a correct posture, and do regular back exercises to strengthen the muscles that support the back. Don't sit or stand in the same position for longer than about 20 minutes.

For muscular low back pain current advice is to remain as active as possible.

Lose weight if necessary. Swimming, walking, and yoga are good exercises to keep the back fit.

Painkillers and anti-inflammatory drugs are used, as are physiotherapy, osteopathy, massage, and acupuncture.

Depending on the cause of the back pain anaesthetic injections or surgery is sometimes performed but only when your physician advises.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk>

## Stay healthy

# Eating more frequent meals may lead to reduced cholesterol levels

People should consider not just what they eat but how often they eat: eating smaller amounts more frequently may have important health benefits. A recent study has shown that levels of total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol were shown to decrease according to the frequency with which meals were eaten.

Researchers surveyed 14,666 men and women about how frequently they ate and measured their cholesterol levels. After adjustment for other variables, mean cholesterol concentrations were found to differ by about 0.15 mmol/l between those eating more than six times a day and those eating just once or twice a day.

Other studies suggest that eating large meals after long stretches without eating leads to alterations in fat storage and increases insulin peaks.

It was concluded that eating smaller amounts more frequently may lead to a decrease in LDL-cholesterol levels and therefore have a positive effect on the incidence of cardiovascular disease.

# Diet & behaviour change lowers cholesterol in obese children

Diet, exercise and behaviour modification together can help obese children to lose weight and induce lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels, a study has shown. With over one-third of the US population considered clinically obese and one-third of all 1-5-year-olds in the western industrialised world being overweight, a large proportion of the world population is at high risk of cardiovascular disease.

With this in mind, researchers

aimed to determine the effect of weight loss on lipid levels. Fifty overweight children (median age 12.27 years) were put on a 1-year weight reduction programme including a behaviour modification programme, a protein-sparing diet, and a home exercise programme with an instructional video. Weight and height were measured weekly and body mass index was calculated.

At the end of the study it was found that the girls had lower low

density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol than the boys and the high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol remained the same. Researchers concluded that a combined programme of diet, behaviour modification and exercise has a positive effect on childhood obesity and helps to lower total cholesterol and triglyceride levels, which may lead to an increased cardiovascular protective effect.

# Favourable effect of walnuts on cholesterol levels

Nuts have been shown in research to be beneficial to general as well as coronary health. This study investigated walnuts, and suggests that they lower cholesterol through effecting favourable changes in lipid distribution. Eighteen people (five men, 13 post-menopausal women, average age 60 years) with high cholesterol and high triglyceride levels took part in the study.

Over a period of 5.5 months, 4 diets were followed sequentially for 6 weeks: i) normal diet; ii) normal diet with walnuts; iii) low-fat diet; iv) low-fat diet with walnuts. Cholesterol and triglyceride levels were measured at the end of each 6 week period/diet. In diets with walnuts, beneficial changes were found in low-density lipoprotein levels. 1



## Health tips

### Gum DISEASE



To find out if you have the precursors of gingivitis, do this self test: After you brush, using the nail of your index finger, scratch the back surfaces of your teeth, especially near the gum line. If you come up with a fingernail full of white, gunk, you lose. That's plaque, which hardens into tartar and causes your gums to lose their attachment to your teeth allowing bacteria to lodge under them and cause disease. It's also an indication that you don't know how to brush correctly or that your toothbrush is worn out.

Ask your dentist for some lessons on brushing techniques and don't forget to brush at least twice a day.

### Put your trust on the CRUST!



When you make sandwiches, do you cut off the edges of the bread slice? Don't. According to a recent European study, bread crust is packed with disease-fighting antioxidants and may be the healthiest part of the slice. Scientists at the German Research Center of Food Chemistry found that when bread is baked, it produces a potential cancer-fighting antioxidant called pronyl-lysine.

The centre contains the sub-stance, but bread crust packs up to eight times more than is found in the centre of the loaf.