

For a healthy heart

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Is your heart hurting? Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the major cause of deaths around the world. The current mortality rate due to CVD is 17.5 million per year. By 2030, this rate is projected to rise to 23 million.

A key reason for this exponential rise is people's lifestyle. Fatty food intake, high sugar consumption, immobile life, excessive stress, smoking, etc. are intimately tied to the development of CVD.

So think again. Is your heart hurting?

MAKE YOUR DIET A WAY TO A HEALTHY HEART

We take our health for granted by dismissing the requirements of our body. We enjoy immediate fulfilment without considering the future hazards. Replacing water with sodas and sweetened drinks and opting for junk and processed food over organic and balanced meals have detrimental

seen many patients, particularly women, who eat less but still suffer from heart diseases because their carbohydrate consumption is out of proportion," remarks Dr Mohammad Ziaur Rahman, Assistant Professor and Consultant of Cardiac Surgery, National Heart Foundation Hospital & Research Institute. Dr Rahman believes that proper knowledge about calories and nutritional values can make people more vigilant about their diet. Some of the ways to educate the citizens about the implications of a healthy meal could be through primary education and media coverage.

Alongside personal measures, the government and the community can make vast contributions to ensuring good cardiac health. For instance, availability of recreational grounds will enable people of all ages to engage in physical activities while enjoying a natural dose of vitamin D from the sun. Furthermore, food adulteration should be strictly controlled by law enforcement agencies to limit their harmful effects on

above 40, jogging should be replaced by walking."

If you're someone who is active anyway and don't want to spend extra time working out, that's absolutely fine! According to Dr SM Zaman, "It depends on your calorie intake and how many calories you burn. Gardening, taking the stairs instead of using the lift, housework, etc. all of these activities burn calories and help to prevent diabetes, heart disease, and high pressure." Apart from these, you can also take up cycling, swimming or even dancing. Not all physical activity has to be a

find motivation to actually get exercise done, Dr SM Zaman has an interesting reply: "A lot of people in our country don't know the benefits of exercising, and so to develop awareness about this ordinary yet important factor, World Heart Day is celebrated. We will rally in the morning adorning ourselves in red t-shirts, chanting 'My Heart, Your Heart.' By doing this, we can motivate each other. Posters will be made to raise awareness and we will tell people to take this day as an opportunity to start anew and start being more active from that day onwards."

some smokers refuse to believe the proven health hazards while others lack the motivation to quit smoking. In case of the latter, Dr Mohammad Ziaur Rahman asked families, friends, tobacco companies, and media to come forward to help smokers. He adds, "There should certainly be a personal drive to quit smoking but this can be strengthened by an external push from friends and family and constant reminders and advertisements from the media and tobacco companies." Campaigns, illustrations, slogans, etc. can have a great impact on people quitting

Bringing changes to the diet, becoming more active, and stopping tobacco smoking are all practical adjustments that one can include in their lifestyle. It is more prudent to maintain a healthy lifestyle from an early stage as opposed to going through drastic steps that are difficult to follow through. So aim for a heart-healthy lifestyle. Reverse the positive trend of increasing prevalence of cardiovascular diseases because my heart, your heart, our hearts matter.

effects on your cardiac health. While your taste buds are indeed satisfied, every time you don't balance the nutritional contents of your diet, your heart suffers.

Therefore, you need to choose what's right for your heart. Dr SM Mustafa Zaman, Associate Professor of Interventional Cardiology, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), stresses that it's crucial to maintain a healthy diet which is low in salt, carbohydrate and sugar, and cholesterol content. He recommends regular consumption of fruits and vegetables and fish that are rich in Omega-3 fatty acids. Poultry, without the skin, also adds to the nutrition. He encourages the use of cooking oil such as sunflower oil and olive oil that contain less saturated fats. Dr Zaman also suggests the use of mustard oil which can be produced in our country and made readily available if production and distribution can be properly executed.

"A balanced diet is of pivotal importance in staying healthy. I have

health. Like Dr Rahman says, "Any kind of adulterated food is injurious to health. They cause more harm than benefits and as doctors, we strongly discourage their consumption."

BE MORE ACTIVE STARTING TODAY

Cardiovascular health can be greatly impacted by aerobic exercise. Aerobic exercise constitutes recurring movements of muscles for an extended period of time during which your heart is trained to be more efficient. Regular aerobic exercise "strengthens" the heart, and so its importance is unbounded.

Anyone in the beginning stages of their fitness journey might wonder just how much exercise is required to become or remain fit in terms of a healthy heart. Dr Mohammad Ziaur Rahman responds to this query by saying, "The recommended amount is 40 minutes of jogging and 20 minutes of free-hand exercise every day for five days a week. For anyone



chore; it can be fun as well. Choose whichever activity you wish, and help your heart stay healthy.

There is also an alarming number of people who are lethargic and would rather be in bed all day than do any form of exercise. If you are one of these people, what you lack is motivation. Some might say that preventing heart disease should be enough motivation to get you up and running but more often than not, the comfort of beds and couches overshadows that.

When asked about how people can

SAY 'NO TO SMOKING' AND LIVE BY IT

Yes, smoking is one of the worst lifestyle habits. It is a major cause of heart disease and cancer and also interrupts other physiological functions. Not to mention, it pollutes the environment and adds to the financial expenses on both the personal and social contexts. Smoking also puts at risk passive smokers who inhale the tobacco-contaminated air.

Despite all these known facts,

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WORLD HEART DAY

Visit your healthcare professional

KNOW YOUR RISKS!

and ask for a few simple checks





(blood glucose levels, BMI, blood pressure, understand the signs & symptoms of a heart attack)

DID YOU KNOW?

High blood glucose (blood sugar) can be indicative of diabetes. CVD accounts for the majority of deaths in people with diabetes so if it's left undiagnosed and untreated it can put you at increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

High blood pressure is one of the main risk factors for CVD. It's called the 'silent killer' because it usually has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people don't realize they have it.

Cholesterol is associated with around 4 million deaths per year so visit your healthcare professional and ask them to measure your levels, as well as your weight and body mass index (BMI). They'll then be able to advise on your CVD risk so you can plan to improve your heart health.