

Reducing Your Risk Of Heart Disease

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Although heart disease remains the number one cause of death in Canada, there are several simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of developing the condition. Dietary changes, lifestyle modifications and natural medicine can all have a large impact on the likelihood of suffering from a cardiovascular illness such as a heart attack or congestive heart failure.

Consume A Healthy Fat Intake

The standard North American diet is excessive in omega-6 and deficient in omega-3 fatty acids. An imbalance in the ratio of these fats in one's diet is clearly linked to an increased risk of heart disease. Make sure you are obtaining a healthy fat balance through an adequate intake of dietary omega-3 fatty acid sources such as fish, grass-fed meats, flax seeds and walnuts. A daily fish oil supplement is an excellent way to ensure a sufficient omega-3 fatty acid intake.

Optimize Your Vitamin D Levels

Vitamin D deficiency is widespread in the lower mainland, as we obtain the vitamin almost exclusively by our skin's exposure to sunlight. Low vitamin D levels are associated with a significantly higher risk of high blood pressure, congestive heart failure and heart attacks. It is ideal to have your vitamin D level (25-hydroxy vitamin D) tested annually to check if your levels are deficient and determine the appropriate vitamin D supplementation protocol. Your 25-hydroxy vitamin D level should be above 100 nmol/L throughout the year for the greatest reduction in heart disease risk.

Moderate Stress Level

An increasing amount of research is being done into the link between stress and heart disease. Chronic stress elevations and resulting adrenal hormone and blood sugar imbalances have been a much overlooked underlying cause of heart disease, especially heart attacks. To reduce the risk of stress-




induced heart disease, keep your stress levels moderate and assess your adrenal gland function through salivary testing available from your naturopathic doctor.

Exercise Regularly

Regular exercise strengthens the heart, lowers heart rate, decreases blood pressure and protects your arteries. A sedentary lifestyle doubles the risk of heart attack.

Consult your GP or naturopathic physician before beginning a new exercise routine.

For most people heart disease risk is something that can be easily modified. By using a simple proactive approach one can greatly reduce this risk while optimizing his or her overall health. This is especially important for those with a family history of heart disease. 

References:

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