

Heart TALK

Heart-healthy and Stroke-free Living with Amy L. Doneen, MSN, ARNP

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From Amy & Jeff

Amy Doneen, MSN, ARNP & Dr. Jeff Emery

Happy Heart Day! (& Month)

Happy Valentine's Day everyone! It's appropriate that we release our newsletter this month to coincide with a holiday that uses a heart as a symbol. After all, February is American Heart Month, too.

While heart health is what we promote all year long at The HASPC, it's nice to see all the extra attention during February. Heart disease remains the #1 cause of death in the U.S. for both men and women.

Women are particularly at risk because heart disease has long been associated with men — and older men at that. We now know that heart disease is just as prevalent in women as men. And it can, and does, strike as early as the late teens and 20s. Women just aren't aware of their risk, their symptoms, and what they can do to ensure a heart healthy life. This issue is dedicated to just that.

~ Amy & Jeff

Research on Heart Attack Symptoms in Women

Dr. Jean McSweeney's research on heart attack symptoms one month prior to the attack and actually during the attack may surprise many people. Unlike the "chest pain" symptoms that most of us have been told to pay attention to, women may experience very different sensations. Here's what Dr. McSweeney's research gathered from 515 female heart attack survivors found:

Symptoms 1 Month Prior to Attack:

- * Unusual fatigue
- * Sleep disturbance
- * Unexplained anxiety

Symptoms During Heart Attack:

- * Shortness of breath
- * Abdominal pain
- * Sweating

Note: In 43% of women, there was NO acute chest pain during their attack!

Amy's Thoughts

"These symptoms can so easily be attributed to other conditions such as stress, menopause, fatigue, thyroid, etc. that many women second guess themselves. It is urgent that we (as women) realize that if we don't feel "normal" something is not ok. We must realize that we are at risk for heart attacks and symptoms such as shortness of breath, unexplained fatigue, anxiety, nausea and sweating could be signs of a heart attack." Women need to hear this message so that they give themselves permission to get checked out — we must not ignore our body's messages ... however subtle they may seem!"

Women & Heart Disease Stats

- 1) More than one in three female adults has some form of cardiovascular disease (CVD).
- 2) Since 1984, the number of CVD deaths for females has exceeded those for males.
- 3) In 2008, CVD was the cause of death in 419,730 females. Females represent 51.7% of deaths from CVD.
- 4) In the US in 2008, all CVDs combined claimed the lives of 419,730 females while all forms of cancer combined killed 270,210 females. Breast cancer claimed the lives of 40,589 females; lung cancer claimed 70,070.
- 5) About 7.5 million females alive today have CHD. Of these, 3.1 million have a history of myocardial infarction (heart attack).
- 6) Each year new and recurrent MI and fatal CHD will affect approximately 515,000 women.
- 7) The 2008 overall CHD death rate was 122.7. Death rates were 91.9 for white females and 115.6 for black females.
- 8) 26% of women age 45+ who have an initial recognized heart attack die within a year compared with 19% of men. This is in part because women have heart attacks at older ages than men do and they're more likely to die from them within a few weeks.
- 9) A higher percentage of men than women have HBP until age 45. From 45–64 the percentage for men and women are similar. After that a much higher percentage of women have HBP than men.
- 10) 64% of women who died suddenly of CHD had NO previous symptoms.

Mother and Daughters Who are Patients at The Heart Attack & Stroke Prevention Center



Adah (right) and Dixie in Zumba Class

HASPC: What do you consider most special about your Mother-Daughter relationship?

Dixie: My mother has always been my biggest fan and supporter. I can tell her anything without her being judgmental or critical. I can only wish I am half the woman that she

HASPC: What does Women's Heart Health Month mean to you?

Dixie: Women are so busy these days, being mothers, wives, working full time jobs taking care of parents, etc. that we don't take the time to take care of ourselves. As an Ironman triathlete, I was shocked to find out that my arteries were at an age of 62. We all need to be aware of our heredity, even if we are active and healthy. You can be thin, have low blood pressure, etc. but heredity plays a significant role in our long term future.

HASPC: How have your lives been affected by Cardiovascular Disease?

Dixie: My grandmother (mom's mother) started out with many small strokes which affected her quality of life greatly, in addition to getting diabetes in her 60's. My grandfather (mom's dad), died of a heart attack in his late 50's.

HASPC: What's ONE thing you want other women to know about CVD?

Dixie: Take the time to care for yourself. If you have any history of CVD in your family, get checked out. I am a very

active, very healthy IM athlete. I had the IMT screening done and thought it would show no blockage. You can be "healthy" and have no idea of your risk.

HASPC: What are some things you're doing to prevent CVD in your own life?

Dixie: I have always been pretty active and at a healthy weight, but after my thorough testing with Amy I am now taking cinnamon for my insulin, eating a small bit of dark chocolate, taking fish oil, 81 mg aspirin, and taking a small dose of a statin. I am also more mindful of the foods I eat. I try to eat a more balanced diet, in addition to focusing on reducing stress, which for me was a change of job. My sleep has improved and I allow myself to nap, which in the past I never did.

My Mom added more days at the gym, doing things that fit with her physical capability such as Zumba. There are so many options out there for seniors who want to exercise. She also modified her eating habits by cutting some carbs, reducing red meat, drinking more water, switching to healthy fats, etc.



Kay & Mary Fight Heart Disease Together

HASPC: What do you consider most special about your Mother-Daughter relationship?

Kay: Our mother/daughter relationship is most special because of our unselfish love for each other; it has endured for seventy-one years and will be true through eternity!

HASPC: What does Women's Heart Health Month mean to you?

Kay: We are thankful that each February can be a celebration of improved knowledge and heart health for women like ourselves. For those who choose to get involved in their own heart health, it can be the start of a new life!

HASPC: How have your lives been affected by Cardiovascular Disease?

Kay: With my family history always on my mind and seeing an ad for the Bale/ Doneen method, I called for an appointment. Having this new knowledge about my heart health, I knew why my father died at age sixty-nine. With this personal information, I now have a daily goal to change and improve the health direction of my life. Mother was having an artery scan and was advised to see a surgeon that very week. As we drove away, I talked to her about getting an appointment with Amy Doneen. I received a big yes! Today

she is a very healthy mother, grandmother and great grandmother at age 91!

HASPC: What's ONE thing you want other women to know about Cardiovascular Disease?

Kay: Age does not matter! You need to know your family health history. Treat yourself well by getting the latest specialized heart care. You are worth it to yourself and your family!

HASPC: What are some things you're doing to prevent Cardiovascular Disease in your own life?

Kay: We do our best to follow the individual guidelines from the Prevention Center. Eating a balanced diet, keeping active, working on how we relate to life's stresses, following our individual medical program, and living each day with a grateful happy heart!

Mother and Daughters Who are Patients at The Heart Attack & Stroke Prevention Center (cont)



Christie (left) and Britt getting exercise.

HASPC: What do you consider most special about your Mother-Daughter relationship?

Christie: Britt is my only daughter, and it gives me great joy to have her and her family living in Spokane. It's so special for me to be able to spend time with her and hear stories, especially those involving my grandsons!

Britt: I love living close to my mom and getting to have her be a part of my everyday life. She is always there to help, listen, and cheer me on as a mom and a wife, and I consider her not only a mom, but a close friend. She is also such a great example of how I hope to be when I am 30 years older... so energetic and full of life. I am so lucky!

HASPC: What does Women's Heart Health Month mean to you?

Christie: It is a reminder of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle in order to optimize my chances of staying healthy. My goal is not necessarily to prolong the years given to me, but to be able to stay physically and mentally active for the rest of my life.

Britt: To me it's all about spreading awareness of heart health to women who may not realize they are indeed at risk. I would not have known about my own risks had my parents not taken the exploratory steps they did into their own heart health and shared them with me.

HASPC: How have your lives been affected by Cardiovascular Disease?

Christie: My husband and I have both inherited some genes that increase our risk of atherosclerosis, of which we were unaware before visiting the Heart Attack and Stroke Prevention Clinic. Knowing about these inherent factors has enabled us to take positive steps to help mitigate these risks. We're glad that Britt is now in the program and that she will benefit from more youthful intervention!

Britt: I would not have known about my early onset of cardiovascular disease had my parents not explored their own heart health. This was a big wake-up call to me to realize that I have to do my part to help mitigate these risk factors and live a healthier lifestyle. I've always lived pretty healthfully, but now I am more motivated than ever.

HASPC: What's ONE thing you want other women to know about CVD?

Christie: The one thing I want other women to know about Cardiovascular Disease (the Silent Killer) is that it can be identified and treated — BEFORE symptoms appear. Education about lifestyle choices and genetic make-up is essential.

Britt: How important it is for women to get checked earlier in life than they may think necessary. So many women are not informed about their possible risks until it's too late; risks that can so easily be mitigated early on by preventative treatments.

HASPC: What are some things you're doing to prevent CVD in your own life?

Christie: My lifestyle choices include doing my best to follow a healthy diet, exercise every day (I try to walk briskly about 5 mi. 6-7 times/wk, plus some core strengthening as well), and endeavor to keep stress to a minimum (easier said than done!) This has allowed my husband and I to continue hiking and backpacking in our senior years. We even climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro last year! Also, regular doses of spending time with family and friends is important to me.

Britt: I try to make healthy choices with my diet, exercise regularly, keep my stress level as low as I can (easier said than done being a busy mom of 3 school-aged boys), and take over-the-counter supplements to help keep my body in check. Being on the younger side of the spectrum of patients at the Heart Attack and Stroke Prevention Clinic, the knowledge of my risks has been the biggest preventer for me.



**Think Positively. Exercise Daily.
Eat Healthy. Work Hard.
Stay Strong. Worry Less.
Dance More. Love Often.
Be Happy!**

~ author unknown



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