

Know Your Heart

The month of February is Heart Month, a time when the Heart Foundation turns to the public for financial support. The following article was provided by the foundation for public information.

Although not generally known for their addiction to gambling, Canadians do gamble on a numbers game in which the stakes are as high as life itself.

The odds vary, but all of us are involved in the game of chance that determines whether or not we will suffer a premature heart attack.

It is a fact that one out of every four Canadian adults has some form of heart disease; that one out of two of us will die from heart disease; that the overwhelming majority of these deaths will be due to heart attack. The age at which these events take place determines the size of your stake in this game.

The family of a thirty-year-old father who dies of a heart attack will suffer much greater mental and financial hardship than the family of an older man dying in his sixties.

And what is the price paid by a forty-year-old suffering a severe but non-fatal heart attack which prevents his return to work?

The loss of another twenty-five years' earnings at peak rate, the lack of financial security which could have been built up before retirement, the drastic reduction in standard of living and the prospect of many years taking costly drugs all add up to a considerable stake in this game of life.

You may wonder where the numbers come in.

Luckily, four out of five of those who survive a heart attack can return to productive employment. In addition, heart research scientists have discovered factors which affect our chances of having a heart attack.

But more important is to change our living habits to reduce the other risk factor categories which may be present. Check and see how many factors apply to you.

Hereditary, age and sex are the factors we cannot control. Heart disease tends to run in families and should emphasize the importance of healthful living, if applicable in your case.

Hardening of the arteries starts at an early age and advances with age to the point where a fifty-year-old man has four times the risk of heart attack of a thirty-year-old.

SEX

Sex is also important as women tend to develop coronary artery disease later in life than men and to a less dangerous degree. Up to middle age, heart attacks are five times more frequent in men than in women.

Now let's look at the factors you can control and remember the odds started are those compared with normal—that is, the chances of the individual who does not fit into a particular risk category.

Consistent high blood pressure increases your risk to four times normal. And what goes up can come down. A veritable arsenal of new drugs and diet information enables your physician to give more effective treatment and control the pressure once it's down.

A high level of the blood fats, cholesterol, increases your risk of heart attack to three times normal. Dietary control may be a key factor and your doctor's advice should be sought in lowering your intake of foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol.

Moderate obesity—up to 20 per cent above normal weight—can double your risk. Look better, feel better and be more active by maintaining your weight at normal for your age and bone structure.

Smoking not only increases your risk of having a premature heart attack but is an important factor in your chances of surviving. Smokers are a disproportionate per centage of those suffering sudden death after a heart attack.

Your risk increases with the number of cigarettes you smoke. The pack a day man has twice the risk and the four packs a day smoker has ten times the risk of a non-smoker. Happily, giving up the need can bring your risk back down to normal.

Physical fitness and its relation to heart attack causes some controversy at the present time. Nevertheless, the increase in physical and mental well-being and the improvement in appearance resulting from fitness may more than justify the effort required.

And there is evidence to suggest your chances of making a good recovery are improved, should heart attack strike.

Finally, keeping fit will automatically assist you to control the other risk factors, so forget the odds on this one and just consider the results.

Well, how did you measure up? If you fall into all the risk categories mentioned and do change your habits as suggested, the numbers will work in your favor. Multiply all the odds together and you'll be pleasantly surprised at the large increase in the odds of favor of avoiding that premature heart attack.

For further information on reducing the risk of heart attack, contact your provincial Heart Foundation.

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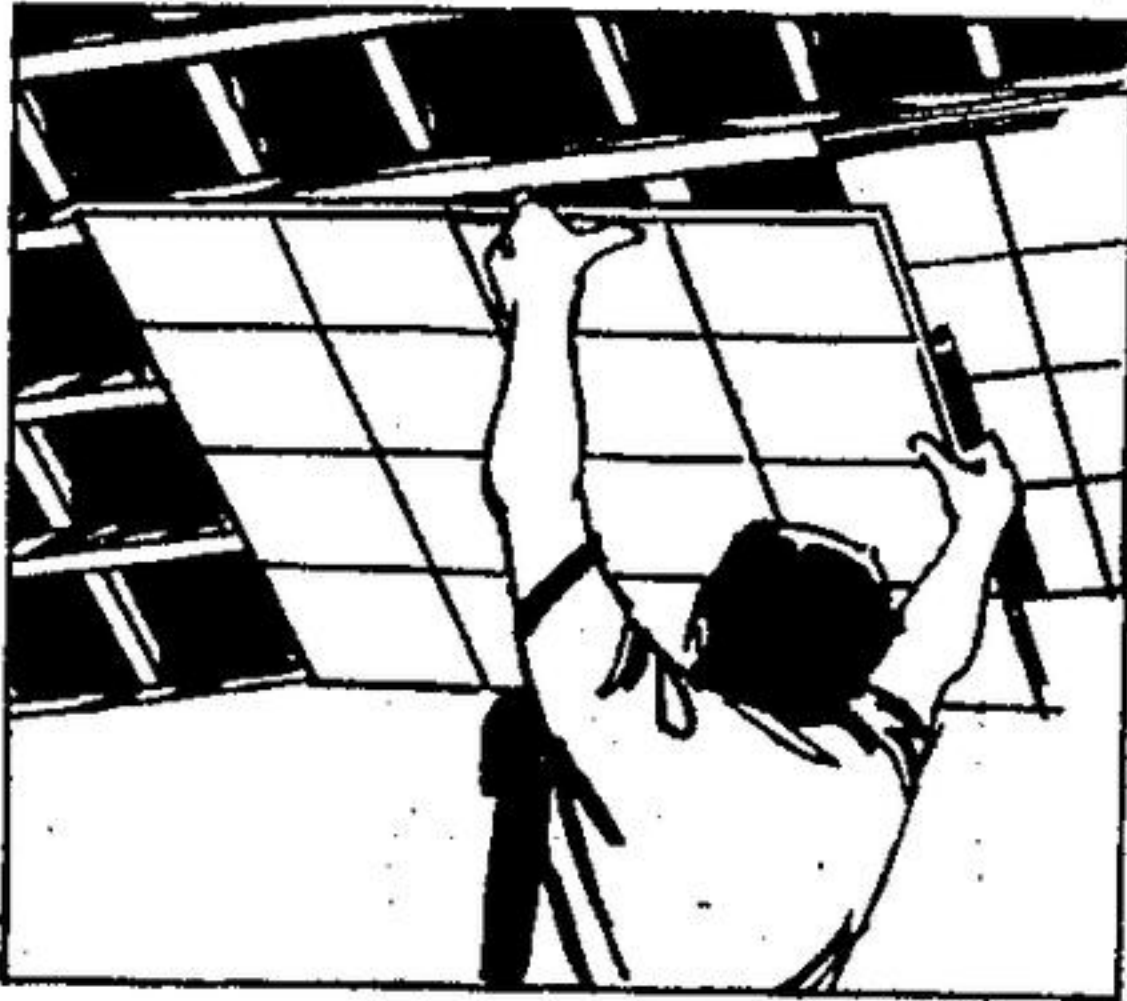
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BEAVER No. 16 in a series

handyman tip

Prepare to panel:

Here's the 2nd. In-depth tip on paneling. Read them all.

1. Remove all old mouldings.
2. Inspect the wall surfaces: if your walls are really level and flat (test this with a plumb line) it is possible for you to apply your new paneling directly to the existing wall surfaces. This operation can be done by either using a panel adhesive, or by nailing (use coloured nails to match panel). If the walls have minor rough spots, simply lightly sand such areas to a smooth finish.

3. If your walls appear to be quite uneven, you will have to apply wood strapping. Strapping is strips of lumber nailed across the wall to ensure an even surface for adhesion of the paneling. NO. 3 in this series will continue on with this process. Remember, see BEAVER for all your paneling needs!

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