

# YOUR HEALTH & FITNESS GUIDE

## Hormone replacement therapy can prevent heart disease

Heart attacks are traditionally believed to be the illnesses of men, and it is true that until menopause, women are less likely than men to develop heart or blood vessel disease. However, following menopause, cardiovascular disease is the major cause of death in women.

Twenty-five per cent of women will have a heart at-

tack or stroke between the ages of 70 and 80. The good news is that hormone replacement therapy, or HRT, can positively regulate blood cholesterol levels and help prevent heart disease.

Research findings point to a significant positive relationship between estrogen use and a reduction in heart disease. Studies today suggest

that estrogen offers some protection against the blockages that can develop in the blood vessels and cause heart attacks or strokes. Data demonstrates that estrogen increases the "good" cholesterol and decreases the "bad" cholesterol in the blood. This allows the blood smoother passage through blood vessels, clearing out the build-

up of cholesterol that can block its way.

HRT also keeps blood vessels dilated and more pliable. This allows blood to flow more easily and nourish all the vital areas of the body such as the heart, brain and all other organs which have a blood supply.

Postmenopausal women who take estrogen generally

have lower rates of cardiovascular disease than women of a similar age who do not. In addition, if a woman already has heart disease, hormone therapy lowers her risk of having or dying from a heart attack or stroke.

The majority of scientific studies agree that hormone therapy protects against cardiovascular disease. Studies

have shown that long-term use of HRT can reduce death from heart disease by 50 per cent. This reduction is even more important for women who already have heart disease or heart disease risk factors. These include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, diabetes or a family history of heart disease.

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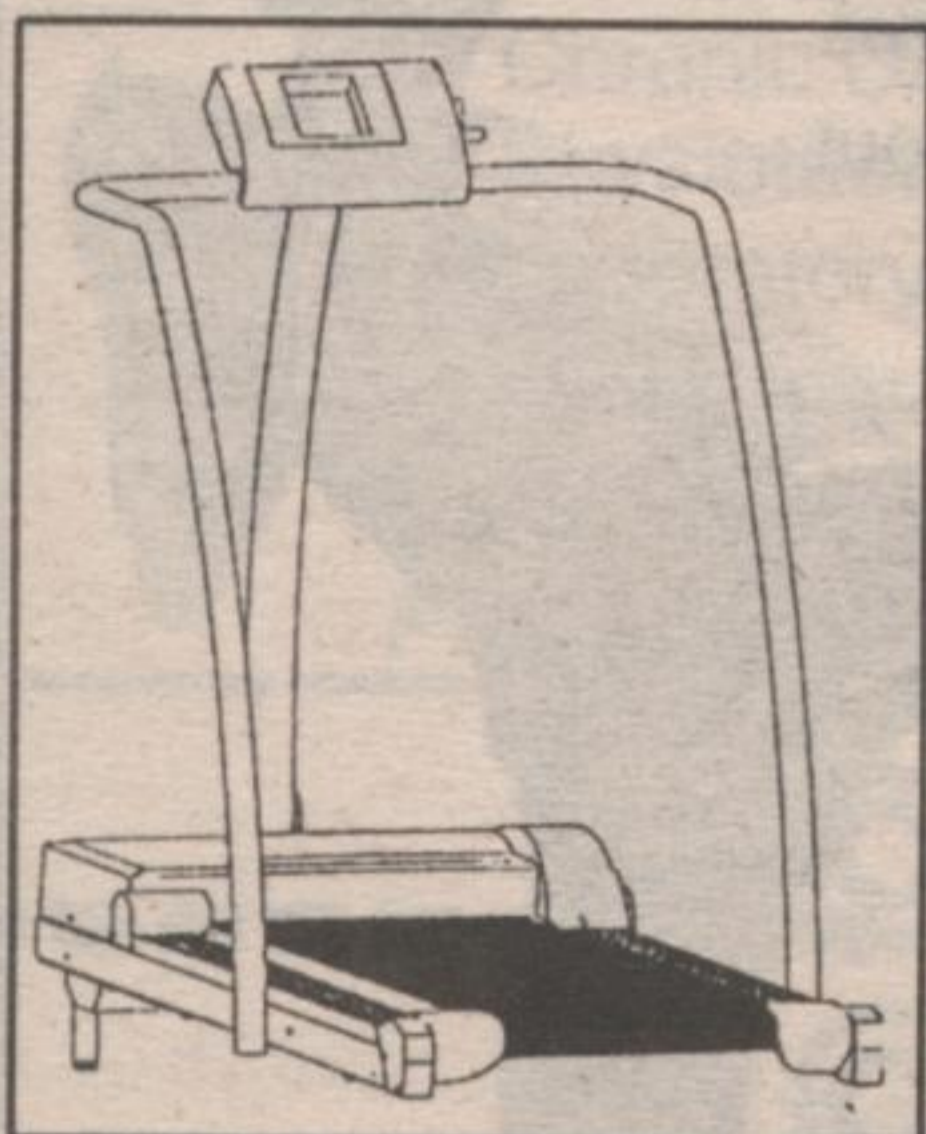
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