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**February is ...
Heart and Stroke
Month**



Although other diseases such as Aids and Cancer may get much of the publicity, heart attacks and strokes are the number one cause of deaths in Canada. They have no age limits, striking young as well as old.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada has designated February as Heart and Stroke Month to bring more attention to these often deadly diseases, including calling for changes to diet, to prevent them. Most Canadians food choices provide more fat than they need and not enough fibre and essential vitamins. If you are one of them you're helping contribute to the increasing prevalence of heart disease and stroke.

Change in your eating habits can go a long way towards protecting your heart from the incidence of disease. Reducing your fat intake, eating more fibre and lots of vegetables is a way to begin. Foods high in antioxidant vitamins such as E, C, and beta carotene play a role in reducing the risk of heart disease by decreasing the chemical damage that causes bad cholesterol. Dark green, orange or red coloured vegetables and fruit are high in antioxidant nutrients. Exercise is another important factor.

Antioxidant vitamins work better when they are eaten as foods rather than in the form of pills, except in the case of vitamin E where supplements seem to lower the risk of heart disease. Foods high in vitamin E include salad dressings, margarine, whole grain cereals, wheat germ, nuts, seeds and leafy green vegetables. But since they also are high fat foods they should be eaten in moderation, except for the leafy greens.

You can lower your blood cholesterol with soluble fibre in foods such as oat bran, oatmeal, psyllium and the legumes such as dried beans, peas and lentils. Apples, strawberries and citrus fruits also have soluble fibre.

Omega-3 fatty foods can help lower cholesterol. These include flax seed, fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, trout, tuna, herring and omega-3 egg.

If you do experience what you may suspect is a heart attack it's wise to know the signals: an uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in centre of chest, behind the breastbone, which may spread to the shoulders, neck or arms. (The pain may be severe). Other signals may include sweating, nausea, shortness of breath and a feeling of weakness.

If you have these symptoms call for help or go to the nearest hospital emergency room with 24 hour service. Don't delay. If you have medication for your heart - take it.

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IS HELPING YOURSELF!



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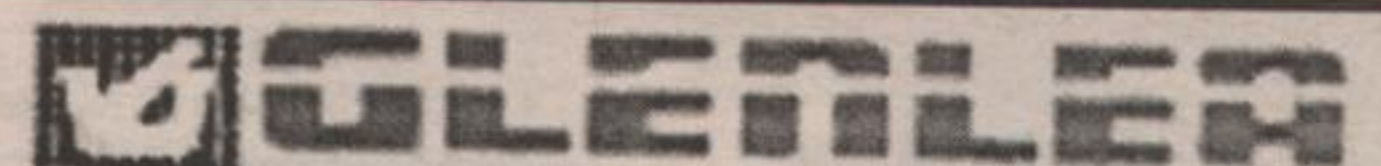
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