

# Heart Disease kills more women than breast cancer does

By LISA CARTWRIGHT  
Advertising Features

She admits it. Markham resident Barbara Ysseldyk says she was doing everything wrong when she was taken by ambulance to the hospital with high blood pressure in 1981.

She had a stressful job as a real estate agent, smoked and had bad eating habits — a combination that often leads to heart disease, especially if it's already in the family. (Both Ysseldyk's parents died of heart disease when they were young.)

Heart disease is Canada's number one killer of both men and women, yet many people still aren't taking the precautions that will lower the risk of developing it, states a fact sheet distributed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

And at the time Ysseldyk was having heart problems, it wasn't considered a women's disease.

Yet, both heart attacks and strokes account for 40 per cent of females deaths and it kills more women than breast cancer does, states the fact sheet.

Despite the numbers, many people don't know the warning signs for stroke and less than half wouldn't seek medical attention if they were having one.

Fortunately for Ysseldyk, she not only knew the signs

— she also sought help.

"I had just come out of a rest," says Ysseldyk. "My top lip went numb and I had chest pain. Whenever there is chest pain, you must go into action."

At the hospital, Ysseldyk was put on high blood pressure pills that made her feel like a zombie. After eight years of being unable to walk up a flight of stairs and requiring frequent rests, she took herself off the pills.

"I took myself off the pills against both my internist's and my doctor's wishes. I was not going to live like that. I took my chances and had an Angina attack. It started in my hands (going numb) and went inside my mouth, cheeks and into

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