

HEART ATTACKS:

Know the Warning Signs, Prevention Steps and Essentials for Recovery

—Part 2 of 2—

While you can't change your age or heredity, there are many heart disease risk factors that you can change:

- **Stop smoking.** A smoker's risk of heart attack is twice as high as a non-smoker's.

- **Lose weight and get moving.** Lack of physical activity and being overweight puts you doubly at risk.

- **Maintain healthy cholesterol levels.** See your doctor to check your cholesterol levels, and commit to eating a healthy diet and taking your medication, if prescribed.

- **Control high blood pressure.** The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to see your doctor. One in four people have it, and nearly one-third of them don't know it. Your doctor may prescribe medications, along with balanced diet and exercise.

- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Eat right, act right, do right, and you'll go a long way to preventing heart disease.

"Heart attacks have been called the "silent killer" in the past, but there has been tremendous progress in the last 20 years and the mortality rate has decreased dramatically, not only due to medical intervention, but also through education and prevention," said Dr. Yeh. "And today, most people can expect to return to their normal routine following a heart attack if they take their prescribed medications and follow a healthy lifestyle plan."

One of the most important medications is called a beta-blocker. Like the "silent" symptoms of heart disease, its effects may not be felt, but its long-term results can increase the probability of surviving a heart attack by up to 48 percent. More than 94 percent* of AvMed members who experienced an acute myocardial infarction were given a prescription for a beta-blocker upon discharge from the hospital, surpassing the organization's goal of 90 percent.

Ask your doctor about the medications appropriate for your condition and also for suggestions on ways to achieve a healthy lifestyle.

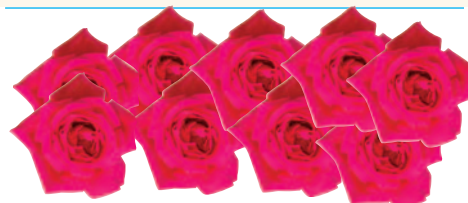
Culture and cardiovascular disease

Coronary heart disease and strokes kill nearly as many Americans as all other diseases combined, regardless of race or ethnicity. However, considering a single race without regard to ethnicity, Caucasian adults were more likely to have been told they had heart disease than Asian, African, Native or Alaskan American adults. African American adults were more likely to have been told they had hypertension than these groups.

*ACCORDING TO AVMED'S 2004 HEDIS (HEALTH PLAN EMPLOYER DATA AND INFORMATION SET) REPORT.

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, SUMMARY HEALTH STATISTICS FOR U.S. ADULTS; NATIONAL HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY, 2002; AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

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