Beyond the Beat: Building a Heart-Healthy Future Through Prevention and Awareness

This World Heart Day, the focus shifts beyond treating heart disease to preventing it. From healthier lifestyle choices and regular screenings to recognising warning signs, building a heart-healthy future begins with awareness and everyday action.

The human heart works tirelessly, pumping blood and delivering oxygen and nutrients to every part of the body. Yet, its importance is often overlooked until a health concern arises. Cardiovascular diseases remain a major global health challenge, making prevention, early detection and awareness essential components of healthcare.

World Heart Day serves as a reminder that protecting the heart is not a one-day commitment but a lifelong responsibility. Small, consistent changes in everyday habits can contribute significantly to cardiovascular well-being.

Understanding the Risks Before They Become Serious

Heart disease does not always announce its presence through obvious symptoms. High blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and diabetes can develop without noticeable warning signs, gradually increasing cardiovascular risk. Other contributing factors include tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy dietary habits, obesity and chronic stress.

While age and family history cannot be changed, many lifestyle-related risk factors can be addressed through informed choices and appropriate medical care. Understanding personal risk is therefore the first step towards building a healthier future.

Prevention Begins with Everyday Choices

A heart-healthy lifestyle does not necessarily require dramatic changes. It begins with practical decisions that can be sustained over time. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts, while limiting excess salt, sugar and saturated fats, can support cardiovascular health.

Regular physical activity is equally important. Adults are generally advised to undertake at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week. Avoiding tobacco, maintaining a healthy weight, managing stress and getting adequate sleep are additional measures that support overall well-being.

The key is consistency. Walking more, choosing balanced meals and making time for relaxation can gradually become part of a healthier daily routine.

Know Your Numbers, Listen to Your Heart

Preventive healthcare goes beyond lifestyle changes. Regular monitoring of blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose can help identify potential risks before complications arise. Individuals with existing conditions or a family history of cardiovascular disease should consult healthcare professionals about appropriate screening and preventive measures.

Equally important is recognising warning signs. Chest discomfort, breathlessness, unusual fatigue or sudden discomfort in the arms, back or jaw may require urgent medical attention. Promptly contacting emergency services when a heart attack is suspected can be lifesaving.



Heart Disease Can Hide in Plain Sight

On World Heart Day, **Dr Anjan Lal Dutta,** award-winning cardiologist, Clinical Director, Department of Cardiology, Peerless Hospital, and Past President, Cardiological Society of India, highlights the importance of recognising the fact that heart disease can remain hidden until a major event occurs.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death today. So, early detection of heart disease is equally important as prevention of heart disease. This is the main message of this year's World Heart Day - 'Don't miss a beat'.

Discomfort may be mistaken for gas or acidity, while some people - particularly those with diabetes - may experience little or no pain at all. This can delay diagnosis and treatment, making awareness of less obvious symptoms important.

The concern is particularly relevant in India, where heart attacks can occur at a younger age. Diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, stress and central obesity are important risk factors contributing to the country's high incidence of heart disease.

Know Your Numbers

Prevention begins with regularly monitoring key health indicators. Blood pressure, body weight, cholesterol and blood sugar should not be ignored simply because a person feels healthy. High blood pressure, in particular, can remain symptomless even when readings are elevated.

Prevention and Early Action

Lifestyle changes remain central to prevention. Avoiding smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active and managing stress can help reduce risk. Importantly, quitting smoking can provide benefits even after years of smoking.

The message is simple: do not wait for symptoms to become severe before paying attention to heart health.

Don't Miss a Beat: Protecting Your Heart at Every Age



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On World Heart Day 2026, **Dr Tapobrata De,** Interventional Cardiologist and Chief of Cardiology, Charnock Hospital, highlights the growing importance of early heart-health awareness, particularly among younger adults, and the role of everyday habits and timely evaluation.

Heart attacks are increasingly being diagnosed in younger adults. Sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy eating habits, smoking, chronic stress and inadequate physical activity are among the factors that may contribute to this trend. Long hours of sitting, frequent consumption of fast and fried foods, inadequate sleep and work-related stress can further affect cardiovascular health.

The World Heart Day message, "Don't Miss a Beat," is a reminder that identifying risk factors early, adopting healthier habits and seeking timely medical care can help protect cardiovascular health.

A Normal Test Does Not Always Tell the Whole Story

A normal ECG or echocardiogram does not automatically rule out heart disease. Since some cardiac tests are performed while the heart is at rest, certain abnormalities may only become evident during physical exertion or stress. Depending on symptoms and individual risk, further evaluation such as a treadmill test or CT coronary angiography may be considered.

Family history is another important consideration, particularly when parents or siblings have experienced heart attacks or significant heart disease at a young age.

Before You Hit the Gym, Know Your Heart

For some young people, particularly those with an underlying inherited cardiac condition, strenuous exercise can carry significant risks. One such condition is hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), in which the heart muscle becomes abnormally thickened. It can occasionally be associated with serious cardiac events during intense physical activity.

This does not mean that young people should avoid exercise. On the contrary, regular physical activity is an important part of cardiovascular health.

Overall, regular physical activity, a balanced diet and adequate sleep form the foundation of cardiovascular wellness.

Recognising risk factors, paying attention to symptoms and adopting healthier habits early can help protect the heart at every age.

24×7 Helpline No. 9903390033/ 9330530095

Revolutionising Heart Care
with the World's Smallest Pacemaker



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A normal resting heart rate generally ranges from 60 to 100 beats per minute. When the heart beats abnormally slowly, a condition known as bradycardia, patients may require a pacemaker to maintain an adequate heart rhythm.

Conventional pacemakers are battery-powered devices implanted beneath the skin in the chest, usually below the collarbone. Electrical impulses are delivered to the heart through wires known as leads. While these devices have transformed the treatment of heart rhythm disorders, complications can occur, including infections, bleeding, lead displacement or damage, blood-vessel obstruction and problems related to the surgical pocket.

Advances in cardiac technology have now introduced leadless pacemakers, among the smallest pacemakers available. Comparable in size to a vitamin capsule, the device eliminates the need for leads and a chest incision. Instead, it is delivered through a vein in the leg and implanted directly inside the heart.

This minimally invasive approach can reduce complications associated with conventional pacemakers and leaves no visible chest scar. The procedure is generally completed within a short hospital stay, with many patients able to return home within a day.

Modern leadless pacemakers are MRI-compatible, and their batteries can last approximately 10 to 17 years. They can also be linked to remote monitoring systems, allowing doctors to follow the patient's cardiac rhythm from a distance.

Another important advancement is the ability of newer devices to detect electrical signals from the heart's upper chamber and coordinate pacing accordingly. Studies have reported implant success rates of about 99.1%, highlighting the growing role of leadless technology in the management of selected patients requiring cardiac pacing. These pacemakers provide a safe, effective, and minimally invasive solution for more than 400000+ patients in need of cardiac support, globally.

A recent case illustrates its potential. A 72-year-old man, referred to as Mr P to protect his privacy, developed symptomatic complete heart block and required pacemaker implantation. His medical history included hypertension, diabetes, hypothyroidism, obstructive sleep apnoea, previous colon cancer surgery, cervical spine problems and impaired kidney function.

Considering his multiple medical conditions, we opted for the world's smallest leadless pacemaker. The device was implanted through a vein in the leg, avoiding a conventional chest incision and lead placement.

For carefully selected patients, leadless pacemakers represent an important advancement in cardiac rhythm management, combining effective pacing with a less invasive implantation technique.

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