

FEBRUARY *Safety Talk*

Topic: Reducing Risk of Coronary Heart Disease

The main cause of coronary heart disease is a build-up of fatty deposits on the walls of the arteries. This “furring” of cholesterol, cell waste and other substances reduces the space through which blood can flow and causes the artery walls to lose their elasticity. This in turn may lead to high blood pressure, which also increases the risk of coronary heart disease.

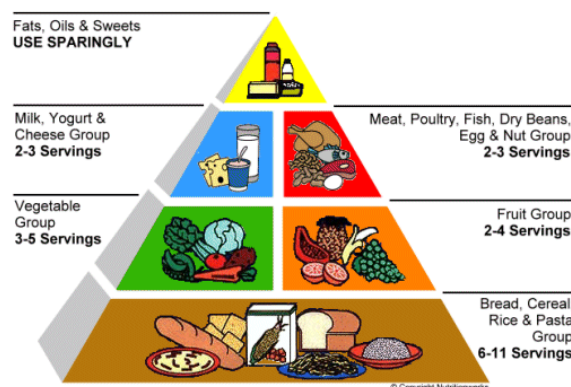
There are several lifestyle factors that increase the risk of Coronary Heart Disease:

- Being overweight – increases the risk by 80%
- Smoking – smokers younger than 50 are five times more likely than non-smokers to die of coronary heart disease
- Raised level of cholesterol, triglycerides or low-density lipoprotein (LDL) increase the risk of high blood pressure
- Lack of exercise

Making simple changes in your lifestyle can reduce your risk of heart disease.

Choose a healthier diet

- Wholegrain varieties of rice, pasta and other starchy foods
- At least five servings a day of fruits and vegetables
- At least two servings a week of oily fish like salmon, fresh tuna or mackerel
- At least 8 glasses of water a day
- Less saturated fat by choosing low-fat dairy products and lean cuts of meat



- No more than 6g of salt per day; season with black pepper, herbs or lemon juice instead
- Reduce the amount and frequency of sugary foods in your diet
- Moderate drinking (between 1 and 2 units of alcohol a day) has a protective effect on the heart, but for every unit over these amounts, increases in blood pressure are likely. It's important that the alcohol consumption is spread over the week; binge drinking increases the risk of having a heart attack

Stop smoking

- Your risk of a heart attack starts to decrease the moment you quit smoking, and halves it after a year of stopping
- Reduces the risk of suffering another heart attack by half, if you've already had one

Be more physically active

- Regular exercise can halve your risk of developing coronary heart disease
- Being physically fit makes you twice as likely to survive in the event of a heart attack

To get started:

“Little” and “often” are the rules: as little as 30 minutes of brisk walking, cycling, swimming or gardening, five times a week, will help get the heart and other muscles working. In addition, try to be more active in your everyday life and build it into your routine:

- Take the stairs rather than the elevator, or walk or cycle short distances rather than drive
- Join your local gym with a friend and you'll be more likely to make it a habit

