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Heart Health: Conversation Starters

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Heart Health: Conversation starters

Talking to a family member or friend about making healthy changes - like quitting smoking or cutting down on fatty foods - can be hard. Use these tips to get the conversation started.

Begin by saying, "I care about you."

"I want you to live a long and healthy life." Or, "I want you around for a long time."

"That's why I want to help you make healthy changes so you don't have to worry about heart disease."

Share the facts.

"Heart disease is the number one killer in the United States."

"Heart disease is responsible for 1 in 4 deaths in the United States, more than all forms of cancer combined."

Make it clear how to prevent heart disease.

Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.

Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.

Drink alcohol only in moderation. This means no more than 1 drink a day for women and 2 drinks a day for men.

Eat healthy and get active. Aim for 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week.

Aim for a healthy weight. If you are overweight or obese, you can lower your risk of heart disease by losing just 10 pounds.

Ask how you can help.

"What changes are the hardest for you to make?"

"How can we get healthy together?"

"What can I do to help?"

Here are some ideas:

Go shopping together for healthy foods. Then cook and enjoy a healthy meal.

Get active together. A good way to start is to meet every day for a fast walk.

Go to the doctor together for blood pressure and cholesterol checkups.

If your loved one smokes, encourage him to call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

Also, keeping a "glass half full" frame of mind has been shown to increase success rates.

Heart patients are more likely to survive if they have a positive outlook, researchers are reporting.

More than 2,800 heart disease patients were given a psychological questionnaire and asked about their belief in their ability to recover from the illness and return to a regular routine.

After 15 years, 1,637 of the patients had died. Of those deaths, 885 (54 percent) were due to heart disease. Patients who had an optimistic outlook were 30 percent less likely to die during the follow-up period, said the researchers from Duke University Medical Center.

The increased risk of death among pessimistic patients persisted even after the researchers compensated for a number of factors, including heart disease severity, age, gender, income, depression, and social support.

"This study is unique because it shows that a patient's attitude toward their disease not only impacts their ability to return to a normal lifestyle but also their health over the long term and ultimately their survival," lead author John. C. Barefoot said in a Duke news release.

Optimists may more effectively deal with their condition, such as closely following their treatment plan, while pessimists may experience more tension and stress, which can have damaging effects on the body, the researchers speculated.

"The take-home message is that having positive expectations can not only make you feel better but also potentially live longer," Barefoot said.

The study was published in the journal Archives of Internal Medicine.

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The doctors at Central Florida Cardiology Group a heart health are experts in cardiac care, cardiac catheterization, electrophysiology diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. They have been providing first class cardiac care since 1948.

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