

WHAT'S UP DOC PETE?

10 Myths about Heart Disease



Peter J. Muran, MD

It's no surprise that myths about heart disease often prevail. After all, the heart is a truly mythic organ — the fount of all life. Heroes and heroines of mythology and legend usually are persons of great heart. Their hearts are the embodiment of the courageous lives that inspire the masses. But although myths can and do inspire, they also can kill.....particularly the many myths surrounding heart disease.

Myth #1: Men develop heart disease more often than women.

Truth: Many women think that heart disease is mainly a male disease. However, heart disease is by far the leading cause of death for women. Women are six to ten times more likely to die of heart disease than breast cancer.

Myth #2: Heart disease only affects older people.

Truth: Plaque-buildup begins as early as the 20s and eventeens. Even grade-school kids are now showing early signs of arterial disease, with their inactive, junk-food lifestyles.

Myth #3: You will not have a heart attack if you don't have the risk factors of high cholesterol and hypertension.

Truth: From 20-50% of heart attack victims do not have any of the well known risk factors for the disease. The newer and more significant parameters are homocysteine, lipoprotein a, insulin resistance or diabetes, C-reactive protein or a vascular inflammatory profile and past bacterial infections. These should be checked by your physician to get a clearer picture of your laboratory risk profile.

Myth #4: No family history means no significant risk.

Truth: A family history of heart disease does increase risk of developing the disease. But many without a family history have heart attacks or heart problems. Risk factors including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, tobacco smoke, obesity and physical inactivity all increase your risk of heart disease.

Myth #5: High total cholesterol is bad. Low total cholesterol is good.

Truth: The whole number means little. It's the "profile" that matters, and includes high-density lipoproteins (HDL good cholesterol) and low-density lipoproteins (LDL bad cholesterol) and triglycerides.

In the next *What's Up Doc Pete* I will complete the 10 myths about heart disease. During the month of February our **Quantum Health** Radio guests will be leading experts in heart disease. Tune in to KVEC, 920am, Saturday at 1:00 to learn more about how to reverse heart disease.



Peter J. Muran, MD

1405 Garden Street
San Luis Obispo
805-548-0987