

# heart health news

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HEART ATTACK SURVIVOR



## PAD facts

- More than **10 million Americans** have PAD.
- Nearly one out of three people ages 70 and older has PAD.
- Without proper treatment, **30 percent of sufferers are likely to succumb to the disease within five years.**

## Step up and learn about PAD

In the United States, peripheral arterial disease (PAD) is a serious disease, affecting one in 20 Americans over the age of 50. PAD occurs when arteries in the legs become clogged with fatty deposits, or plaque. The buildup causes the arteries to harden, a condition known as atherosclerosis. When the arteries in the legs are hardened and clogged, blood flow to the legs and feet is reduced. While PAD is commonly seen in the arteries

in the legs, it can affect other arteries outside the heart, including those that lead to the brain, arms, kidneys and stomach. PAD is a common and treatable disease that is on the rise among mid-life and older Americans. However, it's still largely unknown, often unrecognized, and regarded by many as an inevitable consequence of aging.

The Cotton-O'Neil Heart Center, part

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# cardiocurrents

{ NEWS AND TIPS FOR THE HEART-CONSCIOUS }



## The ABCs of heart murmurs

You may have heard the term “heart murmur” or know someone with the condition. But what is it? Heart murmurs are sounds heard during a heartbeat—such as blowing, whooshing or rasping—that are caused when a heart valve doesn’t close tightly and blood leaks backward or when blood flows through a narrowed or stiff valve. Most heart murmurs are harmless and don’t cause symptoms or problems, so they don’t require treatment. Others may signal a more serious condition, such as aortic stenosis (when the aortic valve doesn’t open fully, decreasing blood flow from the heart) and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (a thickening of the heart muscle, making it pump harder). Possible symptoms of a heart problem include chest pain, dizziness, a bluish tint to the skin, shortness of

breath and heavy sweating with little or no physical effort. If you’ve been experiencing the listed symptoms, talk with your physician.

## Rheumatoid arthritis harms blood vessels

Rheumatoid arthritis is known for causing joint pain, swelling and stiffness, but recent research presented at a meeting of the American College of Rheumatology in Atlanta has found that the harm may go even further. The study of 158 people found that inflammation associated with autoimmune disease could increase the risk for atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in the blood vessels), which can raise the risk of stroke and heart disease. But it’s not all bad news. Some drugs used to treat rheumatoid arthritis seem to lessen the risk of plaque buildup—

specifically TNF (tumor necrosis factor)-inhibiting medications, such as infliximab (Remicade) or adalimumab (Humira). Ultrasounds were performed on the carotid arteries, which supply blood to the brain, and the thickness of the arteries measured. Those taking the medications had a 37 percent lower rate of artery thickening than people not taking them. Researchers point to the need to address heart-disease risk factors, such as obesity or high cholesterol, in patients earlier.

## Flight path may be hurting your heart

If you regularly hear loud jets over your home, they could be affecting your heart, say Swiss researchers. They looked at data from 4.6 million adults in Switzerland and discovered that participants’ chances of dying from a heart attack increased with exposure to aircraft noise. In fact, those who were exposed to at least 60 decibels of noise for 15 years or more saw as much as a 50 percent increase in their chance of dying of a heart attack in comparison to people who lived in less noisy areas.

Researchers chalk it up to noise activating your fight-or-flight response, or you just getting annoyed. Both result in a stress response that can hike heart rates and blood pressure. ♥



### ▶ DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Some women with normal hearts experience cardiac “abnormalities” during pregnancy.
- ▶ You can make recipes for egg dishes with egg whites, instead of egg yolks. Replace each whole egg with two egg whites.
- ▶ Children and adolescents should get at least 60 minutes of aerobic physical activity each day.

# Video games: Not just for couch potatoes

A few years ago, video-game enthusiasts were considered couch potatoes. Today, many gamers are getting into shape thanks to systems like Nintendo's Wii Fit and Kinect for Xbox 360. These systems have players stand and pantomime the moves of their on-screen virtual players.

Research presented at an American Heart Association (AHA) conference showed that the energy expended when playing about one-third of the Wii Fit and Wii Sports games—including aerobics and resistance exercises, tennis, boxing and baseball—is equivalent to moderate-intensity exercise, roughly equal to walking at a 3-mph pace. Other studies have shown that players using Wii Fit regularly could improve their strength and balance.

The AHA recommends that people get about 2½ hours of moderate-intensity exercise per week to help prevent obesity and heart disease, but almost 70 percent of Americans don't get that much physical activity. Many people say that they don't have time

or dislike exercise. People who use Wii Fit, however, may not have those problems; video-game enthusiasts don't have trouble finding time to play because it feels like fun, not like exercise. A recent British study compared the enjoyment levels of Wii Fit players to exercisers using gym treadmills and found that the video-game users enjoyed what they were doing more than the treadmill users.

To spread this message, the AHA and Nintendo have created a joint website, [activeplaynow.com](http://activeplaynow.com), which informs people about the heart-healthy benefits of regularly using active-play video games.

If you're a homebody and have enjoyed Pac-Man or Super Mario Bros. in the past, this form of exercise might be right for you. You don't have to visit the gym, and you can increase the fun by getting family members or friends to play along. Stick with these games long enough and you could lose weight, lower your blood-pressure and cholesterol levels—an impressive score for a video game. ♥

## FAST FACT

**Inactivity is a major health concern in the United States. Nearly 70 percent of Americans don't get enough exercise each week.**



# Serve up a healthy and hearty Sunday brunch



If you grab a cereal bar and coffee on your way to work every morning, you probably anticipate Sunday brunch all week. Everyone loves a warm, comforting meal at home or at a restaurant, eaten with family and friends.

The only downside to brunch is its potential to promote unhealthy eating: Bacon. Eggs. Croissants loaded with butter. Chocolate-chip muffins. These mouth-watering morsels might sound delicious, but eating them regularly can lead to weight gain, high cholesterol and heart disease.

A heart-healthy meal doesn't have to be bland. Try these recipes for a nutritious take on brunch.

## BANANA YOGURT SHAKE

► Get fruit and calcium in one delicious beverage.

- 1½ cups fat-free milk
- 4 small bananas, peeled
- 1 cup low-fat plain yogurt
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp. nutmeg
- 1 cup ice cubes

► Combine all ingredients except ice cubes in blender or food processor; process until thick and creamy. With motor running, add ice cubes; process until smooth. Pour into tall glasses. Makes 4 shakes.

**PER SERVING:** 160 calories, 2 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 85 mg sodium, 32 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

►►► Try these recipes for a  
nutritious take on brunch. ◀◀◀

## RED AND YELLOW PEPPER OMELETS



► Swap in green or orange peppers for color variation.

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 sweet red pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 yellow pepper, thinly sliced
- 4 egg whites
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 2 tsp. grated Parmesan cheese, divided

► In a large nonstick frying pan over medium heat, warm oil; add the peppers. Cook, stirring frequently for 4 to 5 minutes. Keep warm over low heat. In a small bowl, lightly whisk together the egg whites, basil and black pepper. Coat a small nonstick frying pan with nonstick spray. Warm over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Add half the egg mixture, swirling the pan to evenly coat the bottom. Cook for 30 seconds or until the eggs are set. Carefully loosen and flip; cook for 1 minute, or until firm. Sprinkle half of the peppers over the eggs. Fold to enclose the filling. Transfer to a plate. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. of the cheese. Repeat with the remaining egg mixture, peppers and 1 tsp. of cheese. Serves 2.

**PER SERVING:** 90 calories, 3 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 140 mg sodium, 8 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## An effective heart failure therapy for women

An enlightening study on heart failure proves one therapy to be more beneficial in women than in men when it comes to preventing heart failure from worsening. Cardiovascular researchers believe this to be the first heart therapy that's more beneficial for women.

The study, published in the February issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, found that women receive a 70 percent reduction in heart failure (only 35 percent in men) and a 72 percent reduction in death with cardiac resynchronization therapy with defibrillator (CRT-D). This device improves the heart's ability to pump blood and if it senses a dangerous abnormal rhythm, it electrically stimulates the heart, shocking it back into a normal rhythm. Women with mild heart failure who received CRT-D were shown to have less deterioration and enlargement of the heart.

Currently, more than 42 million women in the United States are affected by cardiovascular disease. According to the American Heart Association, heart disease kills more women than men every year.

Researchers believe this therapy is more effective in women because women are generally diagnosed with heart failure caused by diffuse inflammatory scarring, while men's results from coronary artery disease. As a result of the study, researchers believe physicians can now consider personalizing the therapy to those patients—male or female—who have heart failure due to inflammation. ♥

## hearthealthnews

### 2011 Topeka Start! Heart Walk

Sept. 17, Lake Shawnee, Shelter House 1

(west side of the lake)

For more information or to register a team or walker, visit [www.topekaheartwalk.org](http://www.topekaheartwalk.org) or call Kim Williams, corporate events director, at (785) 228-3435.

## ARE YOU HEART SMART?

If you want to be heart healthy, you have to be heart smart. Test your knowledge by answering true or false to the following statements. Then check the answers below to see how well you did.

### STATEMENTS

1. Heart failure is another name for heart attack. T  F
2. Cardiovascular disease is the leading killer of women, but most women don't think they'll get it. T  F
3. Depression is a common symptom among heart attack survivors. T  F
4. Sodium intake and blood pressure have a direct relationship. T  F

### ANSWERS

1. **FALSE:** Heart failure means that your heart isn't strong enough to pump blood around your body properly, which causes breathing difficulties or swollen feet. It may be a result of coronary heart disease, diabetes or long-term hypertension.
2. **TRUE:** Surveys show that many women don't realize that heart disease is their top killer, and most women are unaware of their personal risk factors. Doctors recommend that women know their blood pressure levels and lipid profiles, good indicators of heart disease risk.
3. **TRUE:** More than half of recent heart-attack survivors have symptoms of depression. Women, those with a history of depression and those with little social support are at greatest risk.
4. **TRUE:** Sodium plays a role in regulating fluids and blood pressure. Too much sodium causes your body to retain water, burdening your heart and blood vessels. Reducing the amount of sodium in your diet may help lower or prevent high blood pressure.

## Do you have heart disease?

**Y**ou know that heartburn and nausea are common heart attack symptoms. But do you know other symptoms that signal different forms of heart disease?



Symptom	Caused by	Treatments
▶ <b>Chest pain (angina)</b>	atherosclerosis, a hardening of the arteries caused by plaque buildup on the insides of blood vessels	For mild angina, lifestyle changes like quitting smoking and switching to a healthy diet may be effective. Your doctor may recommend aspirin, nitrates, beta blockers or other prescription drugs. In some cases, angioplasty or surgery may be necessary.
▶ <b>Palpitations, fluttering or heart racing</b>	arrhythmia, an abnormal heartbeat. The heart's electrical impulses don't begin or travel as intended. It can occur in association with different cardiac conditions or it can present by itself without concurrent cardiac problems.	A wide range of rhythm abnormalities can be associated with these symptoms, from benign conditions that don't need any specific medication or treatment to more serious conditions which require prescription drugs and/or ablation procedures. Prescription medications are often necessary to control the rate or the rhythm or both, depending on the symptoms. Some people may need pacemakers or implantable cardioverter defibrillators.
▶ <b>Feeling out of breath, either from exertion or at rest</b>	cardiomyopathy, the thickening, enlarging or stiffening of the heart muscle, or coronary artery disease. Conditions such as hypertension and heart-valve problems may be contributing factors.	Various medications, including ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) inhibitors, calcium channel blockers or diuretics, may be appropriate, depending on your type of cardiomyopathy. Some patients need pacemakers or in extreme cases, heart transplants.
▶ <b>Fluid retention</b>	heart failure, which prevents the heart from pumping enough blood around the body. As a result, salt and water build up in the body, promoting fluid retention in the feet, ankles or legs.	Diuretics and eating a low-salt, low-fat diet may be helpful. Your doctor may suggest that you lose weight, exercise more or take prescription drugs, including digoxin and beta blockers. ❤️

# You can survive a heart attack

**A**bout two-thirds of people who have heart attacks today survive, according to the National Institutes of Health. Even if it turns out not to be a heart attack, it's better to be safe than sorry as many people delay calling for help, which proves problematic. If you're stricken by a heart attack, here are the steps you can take to become a survivor.

▶ **Know the symptoms.** It's crucial to recognize that you're having a heart attack, so familiarize yourself with its symptoms. You don't need to have crushing chest pain; chest discomfort, jaw pain, becoming out of breath, sweating and feeling nauseous can also be signs of a heart attack. Call 911 if the pain or problem persists for five minutes or more. If the symptoms go away in less than five minutes, call your doctor for advice but you don't have to call 911.

▶ **Act quickly.** Once you recognize that you might be having a heart attack, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately: Don't wait more than five minutes deciding whether to call. Many patients who

don't survive never sought treatment, or they waited too long because they were unsure what was causing their discomfort. Emergency room (ER) doctors have treatments to stop heart attacks, but they're most effective during the first hour of the attack. That's why getting to the hospital quickly is imperative for your health.

▶ **Get a ride to the hospital.** Never drive yourself to the hospital if you think you're having a heart attack; if your symptoms escalate, you could get into an accident. Call 911 for an ambulance; if an ambulance is unavailable, have someone take you to the ER.

▶ **Be prepared.** Heart disease puts you at increased risk of a heart attack, so creating a document that you keep handy at home or in your wallet may help ensure that you get appropriate treatment. List any allergies to medication, all the medications and dietary supplements you take and your doctor's contact information. If the ER physicians have any questions, they'll know who to call and what drugs to avoid giving you. ♥



## FAST FACT

Rest is important after a heart attack, but it's just as important for you to participate in recreation and social events and to begin making physical activity a part of your life.

compliments of



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## Step up and learn about PAD

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of the Stormont-Vail HealthCare system of care, is working with physicians and healthcare facilities in the region to develop a sophisticated



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healthcare communication network that uses the latest technology to create a network for screening and diagnosing PAD. We're also joining with BioMedix—a leader in collaboratively working with community physicians, vascular labs, vascular specialists and hospitals—to provide solutions that prolong and enhance life through the early detection of vascular disease. The Heart Center and BioMedix are partnering to develop a regional network called PADnet+. The goal is

to reduce the five-year mortality rate associated with PAD throughout northeast Kansas.

Most people with PAD don't have obvious symptoms. For some people, the first sign of PAD is fatigue, heaviness, tiredness, cramping or pain in the leg muscles. This discomfort occurs during activities such as walking and promptly goes away at rest. Many times, people think this pain is just a natural part of aging and fail to tell their healthcare providers about it. However, leg discomfort can be a sign that the leg arteries are already clogged. Symptoms of more severe cases of PAD include foot or toe pain at rest that often disturbs sleep and sores or wounds on your feet that are slow to heal.

Ask your healthcare provider to check your risk for PAD and act today to lower it. A referral may be needed based on your physician's diagnosis of your signs and symptoms. For more information about the PADnet+ system, call the Cotton-O'Neil Heart Center at (785) 270-4100. ♥