



At the Heart of the Matter: Atrial Fibrillation

Lately, I've been having heart palpitations and shortness of breath. Is something wrong with my heart or am I just stressed out?

Symptoms such as heart palpitations, shortness of breath, and even fatigue could be signs of **atrial fibrillation**—an irregular or rapid heart beat that can cause poor blood flow to the body--that affects over 5 million people of all ages.

However, there are many successful treatments that are less invasive, expensive (and scary) than open heart surgery. Options include medications, in-office procedures, pacemakers, and simple diet and lifestyle changes.

Answering all your health questions is part of our commitment to providing compassionate care.

We can tell you more about this. Let's talk.



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Alice has been having frequent heart palpitations and shortness of breath. How serious is that?

Heart palpitations and shortness of breath could be symptoms of **atrial fibrillation**—an irregular or rapid heart beat that can cause poor blood flow to the body. It affects more than 5 million people and its incidence increases with age.

However, there are many successful treatments that are less invasive, expensive (and scary) than open heart surgery. Options include medications, in-office procedures, pacemakers, and simple diet and lifestyle changes.

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Jane's latest physical showed her sugar levels to be higher than usual. Could she develop diabetes?

High blood sugar occurs when the body has too little insulin or can't use it properly. Left untreated, it can lead to **diabetes**, which affects over 25 million Americans and is a major cause of heart disease.

You can lower your blood sugar level simply by changing what and how often you eat, and by exercising as little as 20 minutes a day.

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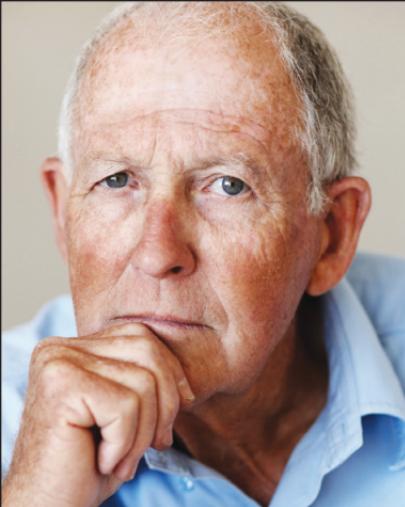


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At the Heart of the Matter: Diabetes

My blood sugar levels are a bit high, but I was tested and I don't have diabetes. So I don't need to worry...do I?

High blood sugar occurs when the body has too little insulin or can't use it properly. Left untreated, it can lead to **diabetes**, which affects over 25 million Americans and is a major cause of heart disease. People over 65 are especially susceptible as the risk of diabetes increases with age.

You can lower your blood sugar level simply by changing what and how often you eat, and by exercising as little as 20 minutes a day.

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David's doctor said losing weight would lower his risk of heart disease. But he didn't explain HOW to lose those extra pounds.

Carrying those extra pounds increases the risk for cardiovascular disease, yet over **60% of Americans are overweight**. But it's amazing how something as simple as portion control and a change in the foods you eat can help you lose that weight and improve your heart health.

There isn't just one way to lose weight. **Several recognized diets** can help you shed pounds, increase heart health, and reduce the risk of a heart disease.

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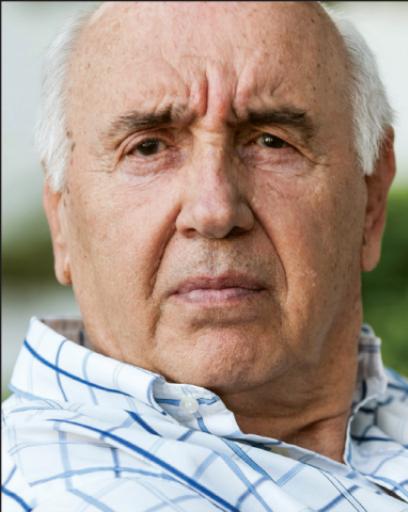
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At the Heart of the Matter: Your Diet & Heart Health

My doctor said losing weight would lower my risk of heart disease. But he didn't tell me HOW to lose those extra pounds.

Carrying those extra pounds increases the risk for cardiovascular disease, yet over **60% of Americans are overweight**. But it's amazing how something as simple as portion control and a change in the foods you eat can help you lose weight and improve your heart health. A proper weight and diet is vital for those over 65 whose slower metabolism takes more time to shed pounds. There are **many healthy eating options** that can help you lose weight, and reduce the risk of heart disease.

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Harry got dizzy after eating and blamed it on his wife's cooking. Now he gets dizzy whenever he stands up. Is something really wrong?



Hypotension is a sudden drop in blood pressure that occurs when you stand after lying down, squatting or sitting with your legs crossed, resulting in dizziness, lightheadedness, and fainting.

Although hypotension is more common in older adults, it can also affect **young, healthy people** and can be a symptom of heart problems or a side effect of certain high blood pressure medications.

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At the Heart of the Matter: Hypotension

I often feel dizzy when I stand up or after I eat a meal.
Is this just ‘one of those things’ or should I be concerned?

Hypotension is a sudden drop in blood pressure that causes dizziness, lightheadedness and fainting when you suddenly stand after lying down or sitting with your legs crossed. It can be a symptom of **heart problems** or a side affect of certain high blood pressure medications, and affects up to 20 percent of adults over 65.

Hypotension can be reduced by changing or lowering medication dosage and eating small, low-carbohydrate meals.

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Mary thought Dick's loud snoring was irritating. She had no idea it could also lead to a heart attack.

Loud, continual snoring could be a sign of **sleep apnea** which, if left untreated, could lead to a heart attack, heart failure, or worse.

Over 18 million people in the U.S. suffer from sleep apnea and **pay an average \$1,336 more** in annual health care costs.

Sleep apnea can occur in individuals as young as their 20s, as well as those in middle age. You should seek treatment now to avoid heart problems and other complications.

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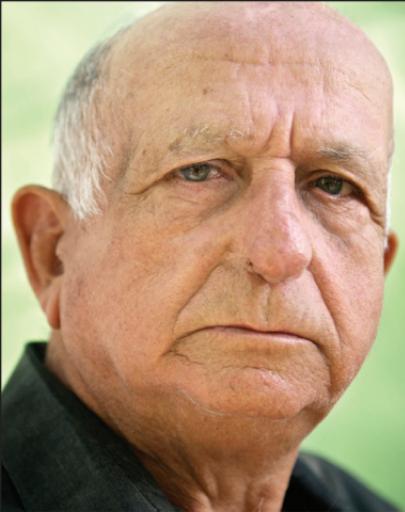
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At the Heart of the Matter: Sleep Apnea

My wife complains about my snoring.
I thought it was just annoying...
Now I find out it could actually
be life threatening.

Loud, continual snoring could be a sign of **sleep apnea** which, if left untreated, could lead to a heart attack or heart failure.

Over 18 million people in the U.S. suffer from sleep apnea and **pay an average \$1,336 more** in annual health care costs.

The risk of sleep apnea increases with age. People over 65 are especially susceptible and should seek treatment now to avoid heart problems and other complications..

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At the Heart of the Matter: Statin Intolerance

I tried taking a statin drug, but stopped when it gave me muscle cramps.
So how do I lower my cholesterol?

Statin drugs such as Crestor, Lipitor and Zocor help reduce cholesterol levels and slow the buildup of plaque in arteries. But these drugs can cause side effects, such as **muscle cramps**, for some people.

But don't just stop taking your medication. Alternatives include reducing the drug's dosage or frequency, switching medications, or starting a diet and exercise program.

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Fred got muscle cramps from the drugs prescribed to reduce his cholesterol, so he stopped taking them. Now what?

Statin drugs such as Crestor, Lipitor and Zocor help reduce cholesterol levels and slow the buildup of plaque in arteries. But these drugs can cause side effects, such as muscle cramps. And statin intolerance increases as you get older.

But **don't just stop** taking your medication. Alternatives include reducing the drug's dosage or frequency, switching medications, or starting a diet and exercise program.

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