

Women and Heart Disease

Difficulty:



Date of release:

Friday 4th November 2011

Discussion activities to be done after completing this EA lesson

Today's report is about women and heart disease. What type of heart disease is most common in women? What do women need to know about their risk of heart disease? What can they do to reduce their risk? Why is heart disease becoming more common in women in developing countries?

Extension discussion topics

A. Talking about and going over the specific topic / idea / issue in listening text

Introduction = Heart disease in women.

1. What people do we hear about in the report? What do we learn about their work in relation to heart disease?
 - Carrie Vincent: She had a heart attack at age 31 and now works with Sister to Sister to educate women about their risk of heart disease.
 - Irene Pollin: started Sister to Sister.
 - Dr. Joanne Foody: doctor at Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston; works in prevention efforts, works with Sister to Sister.
 - Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian: doctor at Harvard School of Public Health; gives advice to help people reduce their risk of heart disease.
2. What should women do to reduce their risk of heart disease? What should they **not** do?

DO:

 - Stay at a healthy weight.
 - Learn about your blood pressure, cholesterol levels and other risk factors.
 - Exercise 30 minutes a day, most days.
 - Manage or reduce stress.
 - Eat more fish, whole grains, vegetables, vegetable oils and nuts.
 - Reduce trans fats.
 - Reduce salt.

DO NOT:

 - Smoke.
 - Develop diabetes, or ignore it if you have it.

B. Expanding on (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

Topic = Heart health.

1. What can you do to keep your heart healthy? (See list in number 2 of section A.) Which of these things do you do regularly? What could you improve on?
2. What things put you at greater risk for heart disease? (being overweight, diabetes, being older, being a man, family history of heart disease, smoking, high blood pressure, ...) Which of these things can you control? How easy are they to control?
(See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronary_artery_disease_-_Risk_factors)
3. A low-fat, low-sodium, balanced diet is supposed to help prevent heart disease. Do you eat this type of diet? Is it common in your country? How good is a typical diet in your country for heart health? Do people think about heart health when thinking about what foods to eat?
4. The report recommends exercising 30 minutes a day, most days. Do you do this? Why or why not? Is exercise encouraged in your culture? Is it encouraged more for men, more for women, or the same for both? Are different body types encouraged for men and women in your culture? Could this play a role in heart disease risk for men and women?

OR, Topic = Heart disease.

Find out all you can about one of the following and give an oral presentation of your findings to a partner or to your teacher: coronary heart disease, cardiovascular disease, hypertensive heart disease. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heart_disease is a good place to start.)

C. Extending discussion of (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

Topic = How we talk about the heart.

1. In some cultures, the heart is used to talk about love, especially romantic love. People might talk about having their heart broken by someone after a break-up, for example. Does the heart represent love in your culture? If so, in what ways is this shown in your language or other languages or your country? If not, is there another part of the body that represents love? Why do you think the heart or this other body part is used to represent love?
2. In English, there are many expressions that refer to the heart. A few of these expressions are given in the table below. Which of these expressions do you know? Do their meanings make sense? Do you have a similar expression in your language?

| | |
|--|---|
| cold-hearted (adj) | cruel, unkind |
| heartbroken (adj) | suffering great sadness after a break-up |
| kind-hearted (adj) | nice, kind |
| heartless (adj) | cruel, unkind |
| have a heart-to-heart talk with someone (phrase) | talk with someone honestly, about personal topics |
| I mean it from the bottom of my heart (phrase) | I really mean it. I am sincere. |
| S/he has a heart of stone (phrase) | S/he is cruel, unkind. |
| wear your heart on your sleeve (phrase) | show your love in a very public way, and also let others know when you have been hurt by love |
| break someone's heart (phrase) | to end a relationship with someone, making that person very sad |

Audioscript

This is the VOA Special English Health Report.

Heart disease is the world's leading cause of death. Yet most cases can be prevented.

Doctors say reducing deaths from heart disease will require not only changes in the way people live. It will also require changes in public policy, and better public knowledge about differences in heart disease between men and women.

Two conditions, coronary artery disease and microvascular disease, can both reduce blood flow to the heart. Experts at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston say heart disease in women is more likely to be caused by microvascular disease.

Finding this condition may require tests other than an angiogram. An angiogram is a kind of X-ray test. Doctors use it to look for a buildup of fatty plaque material that can block arteries. Arteries carry oxygen-rich blood away from the heart to the rest of the body.

The World Health Organization says heart disease kills eighteen million women a year. And these are not just older women. Carrie Vincent had a heart attack after giving birth to her first child.

"My God, I was thirty-one years old. Thirty-one-year-olds don't have heart attack."

Ms. Vincent is now taking her message to women in their homes through an organization called Sister to Sister.

Irene Pollin started Sister to Sister to educate women about heart disease. Ms. Pollin urges women to learn about their blood pressure, cholesterol levels and other risk factors for heart disease.

"The goal is really prevention, having people understand their risk, that they should really get screened, know their numbers and then do something about it."

Ms. Pollin teamed up with a heart specialist at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Dr. Joanne Foody works mostly on prevention efforts.

"The good news is we know that ninety percent of heart disease is preventable by reducing risk."

Reducing risk means not smoking. It means controlling or avoiding diabetes. It also means keeping a healthy weight and eating healthy foods. And it means exercising at least thirty minutes on most days and managing or reducing stress.

Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian at the Harvard School of Public Health also has other advice about reducing the risk of heart attacks. He says people should eat more fish, whole grains, vegetables, vegetable oils and nuts, and reduce the amount of salt and trans fats in their diets. Trans fats can increase the risk of heart disease.

Heart disease increasingly affects women in developing countries. Dr. Mozaffarian places a lot of blame on the global epidemic of obesity.

"People are getting chronic diseases not from eating too much, but eating poorly. And so in fact what they're not eating is actually probably mostly what's harming them."

And that's the VOA Special English Health Report. I'm Jim Tedder.