

Heart Disease

The term coronary heart disease covers a group of clinical syndromes arising particularly from failure of the coronary arteries to supply sufficient blood to the heart. They include angina pectoris, coronary thrombosis or heart attack and sudden death without infarction.

Symptoms

A common symptom of heart disease is shortness of breath which is caused by the blood being deprived of the proper amount of oxygen. Another common symptom is chest pain or pain down either arm. Other symptoms are palpitation, fainting, emotional instability, cold hands and feet, frequent perspiration and fatigue. All these symptoms may be caused by many other disorders. Appropriate tests and studies are, therefore, essential to establish the true nature of these symptoms.

Treatment

The fundamental conditioning factor in all heart diseases is the diet. A corrective diet designed to alter body chemistry and improve the quality of general nutritional intake can, in many cases, reverse the degenerative changes which have occurred in the heart and blood vessels. The diet should be lacto-vegetarian, low in sodium and calories. It should consist of high quality, natural organic foods, with emphasis on whole grains, seeds, fresh fruits and vegetables. Foods which should be eliminated are all white flour products, sweets, chocolates, canned foods in syrup, soft drinks, squashes, all hard fats of animal origin such as butter, cream and fatty meats. Salt and sugar should be reduced substantially. The patient should also avoid tea, coffee, alcohol and tobacco.

The essential fatty acids which reduce serum cholesterol levels and minimize the risk of arteriosclerosis can be obtained from sunflower seed oil, corn oil or safflower oil. Several studies have indicated that garlic can reduce the cholesterol level in persons whose body normally cannot regulate the cholesterol fractions. Other important cholesterol lowering foods are alfalfa and yogurt. Lecithin helps prevent fatty deposits in arteries. Best food sources are unrefined, raw, crude vegetable oils, seeds and grains.

Fruits and vegetables in general are highly beneficial in the treatment of heart disease. Seasonal fruits are quite effective heart tonics. Apples especially contain heart stimulating properties and the patients suffering from the weakness of heart should make liberal use of apples and apple jams. Fresh grapes, pineapples, oranges, custard apples, pomegranates and coconut water also tone up the heart. Grapes are effective in heart pain and palpitation of the heart and the disease can be rapidly controlled if the patient adopts an exclusive grapes diet for few days. Grape juice, especially will be valuable when one is actually suffering from a heart attack. Indian gooseberry or amla is considered an effective home remedy for heart disease. It tones up the functions of all the organs of the body and builds up health by destroying the heterogeneous elements and renewing lost energy.

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Another excellent home remedy for heart disease is onions. They are useful in normalizing the percentage of blood cholesterol by oxidizing excess cholesterol. One teaspoon of raw onion juice first thing in the morning will be highly beneficial in such cases.

Honey has marvelous properties to prevent all sorts of heart disease. It tones up the heart and improves the circulation. It is also effective in cardiac pain and palpitation of the heart. One tablespoonful daily after food is sufficient to prevent all sorts of heart troubles.

Patients with heart disease should increase their intake of foods rich in vitamin E, as this vitamin promotes the functioning of the heart by improving oxygenation of the cells. It also improves the circulation and muscle strength. Many whole meal products and green vegetables, particularly outer leaves of cabbage are good sources of vitamin E. The vitamin B group is important for heart and circulatory disorders. The best sources of vitamin B are whole grains. Vitamin C is also essential as it protects against spontaneous breaches in capillary walls which can lead to heart attacks. It also guards against high blood cholesterol. The stress of anger, fear, disappointment and similar emotions can raise blood fat and cholesterol levels immediately but this reaction to stress can do little harm if the diet is adequate in vitamin C and pantothenic acid. The richest sources of vitamin C are citrus fruits.

The following is the suggested diet for persons suffering from hypertension or some disorder of the heart:

On rising: Warm water with lemon juice and honey or fresh fruit juice of apple, grapes, orange, pineapple.

Breakfast: Fresh fruit such as apples, grapes, pears, peaches, pineapple, orange, melons, one or two slices whole meal toast, yogurt, skimmed milk or soya milk.

Mid-morning: Fresh fruit juice or coconut water.

Lunch: Combination salad of vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage, endive, carrots, cucumber, beetroot, tomato, onion and garlic. One or two slices of whole meal bread or chapattis, curd, fresh grapes and other fruits in season.

Mid-afternoon: One or two wholemeal biscuits and fruit juice.

Dinner: Fresh fruit or vegetable juice or soup, two lightly cooked vegetables, one or two whole wheat tappets. The patient should also pay attention to other laws of nature for health building such as taking moderate exercise, getting proper rest and sleep, adopting the right mental attitude and getting fresh air and drinking pure water.

Water Treatment

The use of an ice bag on the spinal area between the second and tenth thoracic vertebrae for 30 minutes three times a week, a hot compress applied to the left side of the neck for 30 minutes every alternate day and massage of the abdomen and upper back muscles are water treatments which are beneficial in cases of heart disease. Hot foot and hand baths are

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excellent for relieving the pain of angina pectoris. To this may be added hot packs on the chest over the heart for one minute and a cold pack applied alternately for five minutes.

Asanas such as shavasana, vajrasana, and gomukhasna, yogic kriyas like jalneti and pranayamas such as shitali, sitkari and bhramari are also helpful in providing relief to heart patients.

Reference

Shri H.K. Bakhru. (1999). Natures Cure.

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