

Health Awareness

Are You At Risk For A Heart Attack?

by Arthur Agatston, M.D.

(NAPSA)—When you hear about a loved one or friend having a fatal heart attack, you may ask yourself, “How could this have happened? Isn’t there anything that could have been done to prevent this tragedy?” The answer very well may be “yes.”

One of the best-kept secrets in America is that doctors around the country who are practicing aggressive prevention are seeing heart attacks disappear from their practices. Yet, heart disease is still the number-one killer in the U.S.



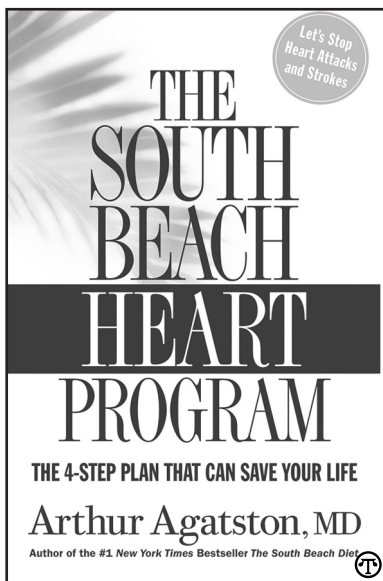
Dr. Agatston

Over a million people have angioplasty a year, and nearly a half million have bypass surgery. Invasive heart procedures are on the rise.

If we know how to prevent heart disease, shouldn’t these numbers be going down? Why are we doing so much “plumbing” and not enough “healing”?

Answering these questions from “The South Beach Heart Program” can help determine if you are at risk for a heart attack or stroke:

- Have you been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease?
- For men, are you 40 years of age or older and for women, are you post-menopausal?
- Do you smoke or have exposure to second-hand smoke?
- Have you been diagnosed with diabetes, prediabetes or metabolic syndrome?
- Are you taking medications to treat high blood pressure or is your blood pressure greater than 140/90?
- Do you have a waist circum-



More than one million Americans a year will have a heart attack or stroke. This book about prevention methods may help improve your odds.

ference of more than 40 inches if you’re a man and 35 inches if you’re a woman?

- Do you have a high Calcium Score?
- Is your HDL or “good” cholesterol level less than 40 mg/dL if you’re a man or less than 50 mg/dL if you’re a woman?
- Is your LDL or “bad” cholesterol level more than 130 mg/dL?
- Do you have a family history of early heart disease?
- Are your triglycerides greater than 150 mg/dL?
- Is your fasting blood glucose greater than 100 mg/dL?
- Is your homocysteine level of more than 12 μ mol/L?
- Is your level of C-reactive protein (CRP) more than 3 mg/L?
- Do you spend less than 2 hours a week doing exercise?
- Do you eat fish twice a week?

- Do you eat fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains daily?
- Do you avoid trans fatty acids in your diet?

While doctors have the diagnostic tools to detect cardiovascular disease in its early stages, years if not decades before a heart attack occurs, too few people are taking advantage of these tools.

Because many heart attacks occur in people who have unremarkable conventional risk factors, getting the right diagnostic tests can be critical.

Talk with your doctor about whether you are a candidate for a heart scan, a noninvasive procedure that shows the amount of calcified plaque in your coronary arteries.

Also ask about advanced blood testing, which can determine whether you have dangerous small, dense LDL and HDL cholesterol particles, elevated C-reactive protein (a marker for inflammation), and/or high homocysteine levels, another predictor of heart attack. Using the results of such advanced tests can help your doctor develop an aggressive prevention program that is right for you.

“The South Beach Heart Program” outlines all of these tests to help you understand their significance and develop an action plan with your doctor.

Arthur Agatston, M.D., is a cardiologist and an associate professor of medicine at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. He lectures extensively on prevention. The doctor also maintains a full-time cardiology practice in Miami Beach.

“The South Beach Heart Program: The 4-Step Plan That Can Save Your Life” is published by Rodale and is available wherever books are sold.