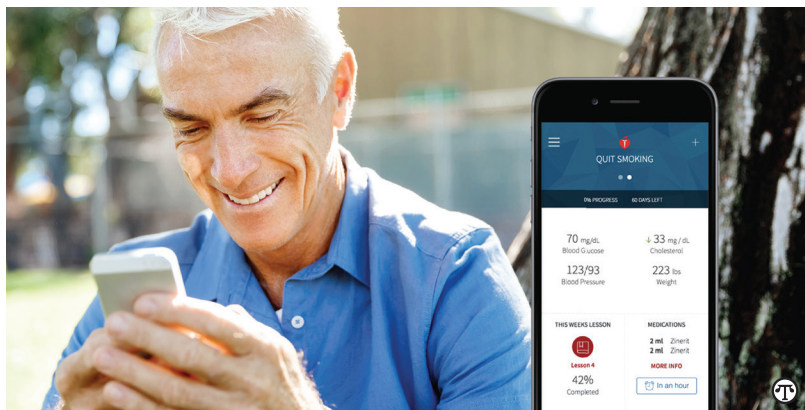


Holiday Health Hints

Reducing Your Risk Of Heart Attack



While heart attack risk is highest in winter, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is a good idea all year.

(NAPS)—While death from heart attack is highest during the winter holidays, you can protect heart health with diet, exercise and taking prescribed medication.

The Problem

Juggling all the extra pressures of a busy holiday schedule can wreak havoc on your healthy habits, but it's one of the most dangerous times to lower your guard. Research shows deaths from heart attacks peak during December and January.

“Changes in diet and alcohol consumption; stress from family interactions, strained finances, travel and entertaining; and even respiratory problems from burning wood are all possible reasons for the increase in heart attacks during the holidays,” explains John Osborne, M.D., Ph.D., a preventive cardiologist for State of the Heart Cardiology.

A Solution

If you've had a heart attack, it's especially important to maintain a healthy diet, stick to an exercise plan and take medicines as prescribed. About 20 percent of heart attack survivors over the age of 45 will have another heart attack within five years of their first.

“Making lifestyle changes can be difficult,” adds Osborne. “Many of my patients use mobile apps that provide education and electronic reminders to help stay focused on how to protect their heart health and minimize risks.”

One such app is My Cardiac Coach, a free and easy-to-use mobile app developed by the American Heart Association

that empowers people to take control of their heart health using interactive tools to learn about their condition, track medications and closely monitor any changes.

One Man's Story

For example, Lex Roulston overhauled his diet and increased exercise after having a quintuple bypass surgery in 2001, since all five of his coronary arteries were blocked. Roulston said he “never thought about what he ate or worried about his health,” and that his bypass surgery “was a big wake-up call” to take his health seriously and protect his heart health.

Roulston, now 84, relied on in-person resources through a cardiac care program following his bypass surgery, but said mobile tools such as My Cardiac Coach can provide the support, as well as access to medical information, that proved so crucial as he made significant lifestyle changes.

“It's just another tool to help you make a lifestyle change,” said Roulston, who, with his wife, funded the Lex and Eileen Roulston Lifestyle Change Initiative and Lee County Support Network for Survivors and Caregivers to provide a local support network to people in Lee County, Fla. “Having the tools to support you makes it a lot easier to make changes, especially as you face challenges.”

Learn More

For further facts about My Cardiac Coach and to download the app for Apple or Android mobile devices, go to www.heart.org/MyCardiacCoach.