

February 6, 2007 TAKE CONTROL: REDUCE YOURS CHANCES OF DEVELOPING HEART DISEASE

Learn More About America's Leading Killer and How to Prevent It

It may not get as much airtime on the 10 o'clock news as diseases like avian flu, AIDS or an E. coli outbreak, but each year almost 700,000 people die of heart disease in the United States, making it the leading killer of any other disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

On Tuesday, Feb. 13, Dr. Ash Jain, cardiologist and medical director of Washington Hospital's Critical Care Services and Stroke Program, and Lorie Roffelsen, a Washington Hospital registered clinical dietitian, will present a free Health & Wellness seminar about how to take better care of one of the most important organs in the body.

Catch heart disease early

"The main point I want to get across to the audience is how they can prevent heart disease, and second if you already have it, how you can take steps to deal with it and prevent it from worsening," Dr. Jain says.

The term heart disease actually encompasses several more specific heart conditions. The most common type of heart disease in the United States is coronary artery disease (CAD), which occurs when the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle become hardened and begin to narrow because of a buildup of plaque, which is made up of cholesterol, white blood cells, calcium, and other substances.

Dr. Jain will focus on CAD and the weakening of the heart muscle which can lead to heart failure, meaning the heart isn't pumping as well as it should be in order to deliver oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood to the body's cells, causing fatigue and shortness of breath.

"If you don't treat risk factors and symptoms of coronary artery blockage early, you are opening yourself to the risk of having a heart attack and you don't want that," Dr. Jain explains. "If you do have a heart attack, seeking treatment quickly can definitely lead to saving lives and avoid further damage to the heart muscle; this is very well known. It is important that one tries to seek treatment as soon as possible."

The five major risk factors for heart disease, according to Dr. Jain, are: diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, family history of heart disease and smoking. You may not be in control of your genetics as of now, but four out of five of these factors are in your control.

"Any patients who have high cholesterol, diabetes or high blood pressure - if you can bring these conditions under control, the chances of preventing a heart attack are high," Dr. Jain says. During the seminar he will discuss:

- How to recognize and prevent heart attack
- Prevention and management of the disease after it has been diagnosed
- Treatment options, including diet and exercise, medications and interventional procedures

Dr. Jain will talk about the pros and cons of the two major forms of intervention, angioplasty and bypass surgery.

Angioplasty involves dilating an area of blocked artery using a tube known as a catheter that has an inflatable small sausage-shaped balloon at its tip.

During bypass surgery, surgeons use a healthy blood vessel from another part of the body, like the leg, and make a detour around the blocked part of the coronary artery.

"Patients have to remember the main thing is that we are buying time with angioplasty and bypass surgery, not modifying the disease," he explains. "Patients need to change their diet and exercise habits and treat the problem; whereas above procedures are just to buy time. The disease will come back with both treatment modalities unless they take steps to prevent it."

See [You Are What You Eat](#) for more information about how a heart healthy diet can impact heart disease.

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Know the Facts

WHAT: Free "Take Care of Your Heart & Healthy Valentine Diet" class

WHEN: Tuesday, February 13, from 1 to 3 p.m.

WHERE: Conrad E. Anderson, M.D. Auditorium, Rooms A & B, located at 2500 Mowry Avenue in Fremont across the street from the main hospital

TO REGISTER: Call Washington Hospital's Health Connection line toll-free at (800) 973-7070

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