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# Don't Be a Victim of Heart-Scare!

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**T**OO MANY PEOPLE are abnormally conscious of their hearts these days. The best thing you can do is live and forget about the fact that you have a heart. It will go on beating, for the heart is the strongest and toughest organ in your body.

A muscle about the size of a man's fist, it beats an average of 70 to 80 times a minute under normal conditions. During emergencies, it can readily step up its rate to 130 or more beats per minute, indicating a tremendous reserve capacity and power unequalled by any man-made pump.

Among the many commonly held fallacies about the heart, the one that seems to cause the greatest amount of fear is the belief that a heart attack spells imminent doom or invalidism. The truth is a far more heartening story.

There are three main categories of heart disease, (1) congenital, (2) rheumatic, and (3) arteriosclerotic.

Rheumatic heart disease is more common and usually develops between the ages of 5 and 15 as a result of rheumatic fever or St. Vitus' dance.

The type of heart disease that concerns most people is arteriosclerotic. Between the ages of 45 to 64, arteriosclerotic heart disease accounts for about four-fifths of the total heart-disease deaths among men and nearly two-thirds of the deaths among women.

As we grow older, the arteries throughout the body become harder and lose their elasticity, thereby offering greater resistance to the circulation of blood. A form of arteriosclerosis called atherosclerosis produces the same results by roughening and thickening the lining of the artery.

Let's examine the heart-disease problem by answering the most commonly asked questions:

## Q. What causes a heart attack?

**A.** There are many theories but little proof. Some authorities put the blame on smoking, others on stress, still others on overweight or heredity. The generally accepted view today is that a heart attack may result from arteriosclerosis which may be accelerated by unintelligent living—inadequate sleep, poor diet, lack of exercise, and too much smoking, with perhaps a little extra push from hereditary and stress factors.

## Q. What are the symptoms of a heart attack?

**A.** Severe pain in the chest and sudden shortness of breath. The pain may be a dull sensation, as if something is squeezing your chest together, or it may be quite sharp, radiating out to one or both arms. Pain or constrictions are sometimes accompanied by a feeling of nausea as well as by general weakness and sweating.

## Q. What should you do when you think you're having an attack?

**A.** There are a number of other organic and functional disruptions which can cause symptoms

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*Don't let all the talk  
about coronaries worry you  
into an attack—learn  
the symptoms, live sensibly,  
then forget you have a heart*