

Health Notes

What every woman should know about heart disease

A common misperception exists among women that they have a greater risk of dying from breast cancer than heart disease. Public education campaigns have done a wonderful job of raising awareness of breast cancer risks. While this has undoubtedly saved lives, women need to be equally aware of the very real risks of heart disease.

Statistically, women are twice as likely to die from heart disease than all cancers combined, and more than 32 million American women have heart disease. Nearly eight percent of women ages 30 to 34 have advanced lesions in their arteries, while three-quarters have fatty streaks – the beginning of hardening of the arteries. In addition, an alarming 30 percent increase in Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) occurred among young women between 1989 and 1996, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Heart disease is characterized by blockages in the arteries of the heart that can eventually interrupt the blood supply to the heart muscle, causing a heart attack. Either gender may experience:

- pressure or squeezing pain in the center of the chest
- pain in the neck, shoulder or arm
- chest discomfort accompanied by lightheadedness, fainting, nausea, sweating, or shortness of breath.

However, heart attack symptoms often differ for women. Women may feel the following symptoms and not realize they are associated with a heart attack:

- Atypical chest, stomach or abdominal pain
- Recent, unusual shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness without chest pain
- Anxiety
- Weakness or fatigue
- Back pain
- Palpitations
- Cold sweat or paleness
- Upper abdominal pressure or discomfort

SCD, on the other hand occurs when the body's electrical system malfunctions, causing the heart to misfire (arrhythmia) and the cardiovascular system to collapse. While SCD is technically different than heart disease, its victims often have many heart disease risk factors.

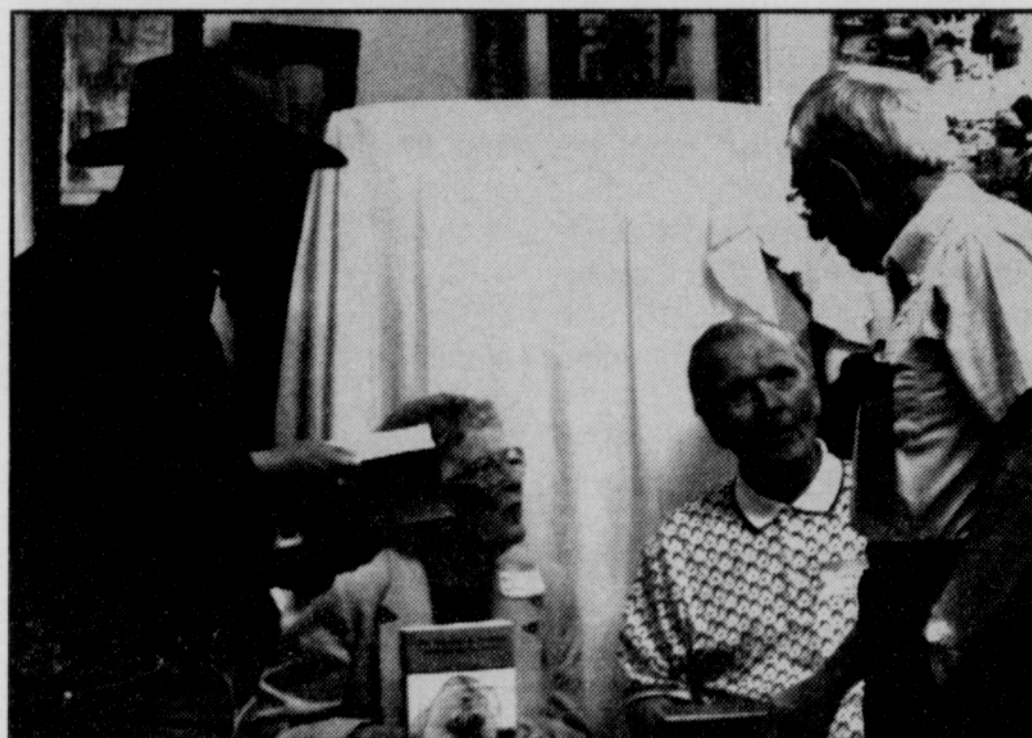
Those risk factors include:

- High blood pressure or hypertension
- High blood cholesterol – total blood cholesterol above 200 mg/dl; LDL above 129 mg/dl; HDL under 40 mg/dl; triglycerides above 150 mg/dl
- Smoking – 25 percent of American women age 25 to 44 smoke
- Obesity
- High-fat diet
- Inactivity – 29 percent of Americans report that they don't do any regular physical activity

The good news is that we all have the ability to do something about each risk factor! Alterations to diet can combat high cholesterol and obesity, while exercise is the best medicine for everything from high blood pressure to inactivity. Getting more physical activity can be as easy as turning up your favorite tunes and dancing up a storm in your living room. Take a brisk walk, ride a bike, or find some other activity to do alone or with friends and family.



Above, Harrison Eastman, who turned 102 in January 2005, chats with old friend Ona Libel Burnam at the Nehalem Valley Pioneer Association meeting on June 12 at Natal Grange. Below, Stella Bellingham Satern, seated, discusses her history book, *The Nehalem River Valley, Settling the Big Timberland*, at the Pioneer meeting



Don't resist the next snack attack

When trying to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, you may think you must resist the urge to nibble between meals.

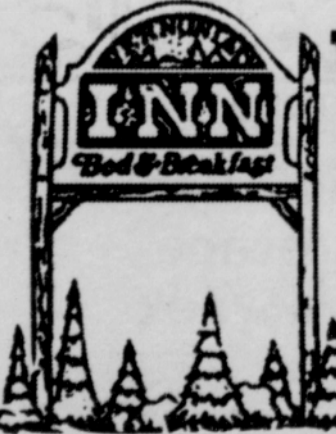
"Snacks can be an important element in a good eating program," said Pat Wheeler, a representative of TOPS (Take off Pounds Sensibly). "The key is to plan for them."

Planning helps you keep on hand the foods you'll want for healthy snacking, such as fresh fruit, crisp vegetables like celery, green peppers, and bro-

coli florets, washed and cut into bite-sized pieces; low fat breads and crackers; and crunchy, low-fat treats like air-popped popcorn and flavored rice cakes.

Healthful snacks can help you safely navigate the "hunger valleys" between meal times. If you plan for snacking and keep it within limits, it can be an ally in your weight-loss effort.

Members of your local TOPS chapter trade helpful hints on topics like smart snacking and other ways to stick to an eating program. To find out more about TOPS in this area, call Louise Green at 503-755-2328 or Pat Wheeler, 503-429-1584. TOPS meets Monday evenings at 6:00 p.m. at the Mist-Birkenfeld Fire District Main Station. Anyone interested is invited to attend. You may call TOPS toll free at 1-800-932-8677, or see their website, <www.tops.org>.



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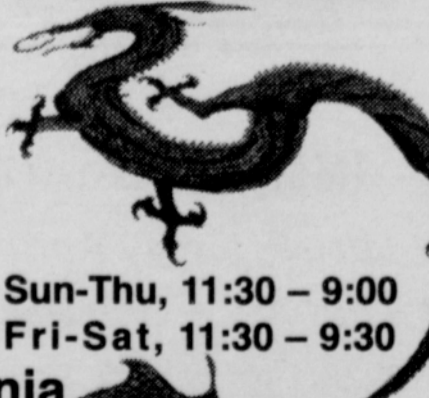
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