Be Healthy @ Work: What Do You Know About Heart Attacks?

You have probably seen the classic image of a heart attack before—a man gasps for breath, clutches his heart and falls to the ground. But in reality, it does not always happen that way. In 2011, 12,570 Missourians were hospitalized due to a heart attack and 4,022 of them were fatal. Take time this February, American Heart Month, to learn the signs of a heart attack.

What is a heart attack?

Our hearts require a constant supply of oxygen-rich blood for nourishment. Sometimes the arteries that provide the heart with that critical blood supply become narrow and the blood cannot flow as well as it should. Fatty matter, calcium, proteins and inflammatory cells build up and form plaque. The plaque deposits have a hard outer shell but are soft on the inside.

When that hard outer shell cracks, platelets (disc-shaped particles in the blood that aid with clotting) rush to that area and blood clots form around the plaque. If the blood clot blocks the artery completely, the heart muscle becomes starved for oxygen. Without oxygen, the muscle dies, causing permanent damage. This is a heart attack.

What are the symptoms of a heart attack?

The warning signs and symptoms aren’t the same for everyone. For some it starts slowly with mild pain or discomfort; some do not experience any symptoms at all; in others symptoms happen suddenly or can develop slowly over hours, days or weeks. Some symptoms include:

- Rapid or irregular heartbeats
- Discomfort, pressure, heaviness or pain in the chest, arm or below the breastbone
- Discomfort radiating to the back, jaw, throat or arm
- A feeling of fullness, indigestion or a choking feeling (may feel like heartburn)
- Sweating, nausea, vomiting or dizziness
- Extreme weakness, anxiety or shortness of breath

Many women do not have chest pain or discomfort during a heart attack, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Some women describe the event as upper back pressure that feels like squeezing or like a rope being tied around them. Other symptoms that women experience prior to or during a heart attack include:

- Unusual fatigue
- Sleep disturbance
- Shortness of breath
- Indigestion
- Anxiety
- Cold sweat
- Dizziness
- Fainting

Risk Factors and Prevention Tips

Certain factors can contribute to the buildup of fatty deposits that narrow the arteries to your heart and the rest of your body.

Non-Preventable Risk Factors

- Age. Men aged 45 and older and women 55 or older are more likely to have a heart attack than younger men and women.
- Family history. Those with a family history of heart disease are more likely to develop it.
Preventable Risk Factors

- **Physical inactivity.** An inactive lifestyle can contribute to high blood cholesterol levels and obesity. Being active 30 minutes daily can help cut your heart attack risk.
- **Tobacco use.** Smoking and long-term exposure to secondhand smoke can damage the interior walls of the arteries. This allows deposits of cholesterol and other substances to collect and limit blood flow. Smokers have more than twice the risk for a heart attack as nonsmokers. No matter how much or how long you've smoked, quitting will benefit you. Smoking is the most preventable risk factor.
- **High blood cholesterol or triglyceride levels.** Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol ("bad cholesterol") is most likely to narrow your arteries. High triglycerides can also up your risk of a heart attack. Eat a heart-healthy diet low in salt, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and refined sugars. Try to increase your intake of foods rich in vitamins and other nutrients, especially antioxidants, which have been proven to lower your risk for heart attacks.
- **Diabetes.** High blood glucose levels over time can lead to increased deposits of fatty materials on the inside of the blood vessel walls. These deposits may affect blood flow, increasing the chance of clogging and hardening of blood vessels—which increase your risk.
- **Obesity.** Obesity raises your risk of having a heart attack because of its relationship with high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure and diabetes. It can also put significant strain on your heart. Being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight and eating a healthy diet can help lower your obesity risk.
- **Stress.** Poorly controlled stress and anger can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Use stress and anger management techniques to help lower your risk.

What should you do if you think you are having a heart attack?

If you think you are having a heart attack or having symptoms, don’t ignore or be embarrassed to call 9-1-1 for help. Your quick actions may save your life! Calling an ambulance is the best and safest way to get to the hospital. Emergency medical services (EMS) can check how you are doing and administer any care or medical treatments you may need. You can also chew a plain, uncoated regular strength aspirin to inhibit blood clotting. A chewed aspirin gets into the bloodstream more quickly than one swallowed whole (but do not take one if you are allergic to them).

Although you may not completely be able to avoid a heart attack, taking preventative measures can help you control and manage your risk factors and help lower your risk.

Resources:
- [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/heartattack/signs.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/heartattack/signs.html)

“Health is the thing that makes you feel that now is the best time of the year.”

-Franklin P. Adams
An Ounce of Prevention: Preventing Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Now that cold weather is here, we are spending more time indoors. During this time of year, respiratory illnesses are more likely to occur.

Pertussis, a respiratory illness commonly known as whooping cough, is a very contagious disease spread from person to person. People can spread the disease by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others, who then breathe in the bacteria. It can cause serious illness in infants, children and adults. The disease usually starts with cold-like symptoms and sometimes a mild cough or fever. After one to two weeks, severe coughing can begin. Unlike the common cold, it can become a series of coughing fits that continue for 10 weeks or more. Pertussis can cause violent and rapid coughing, repeatedly, until the air is gone from the lungs and you are forced to inhale with a loud "whooping" sound. This extreme coughing can cause you to throw up and be very tired.

Pertussis is generally treated with antibiotics. Treatment may make your infection less severe if it is started early, before coughing fits begin. Treatment can also help prevent spreading the disease to close contacts. Recovery can be slow. The cough becomes less severe and less frequent, however, coughing fits can return with

other respiratory infections for many months after the initial illness.

The best way to prevent pertussis among infants, children, teens and adults is to get vaccinated. Also, keep infants and other people at high risk for complications away from infected people. While pertussis vaccines are the most effective tool, we have to prevent this disease since no vaccine is 100% effective. If pertussis is circulating in the community, there is a chance that a fully vaccinated person, of any age, can get this very contagious disease. However, if you have been vaccinated, the infection is usually less severe. If you or your child develops a cold that includes a severe cough or a cough that lasts for a long time, it may be pertussis. The best way to find out is to contact your doctor.

For more information on pertussis go to:  http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html

From Our Readers...

Want to know if your body is younger (or older) than your age? Take the body quiz at http://www.blogthings.com/howoldisyourbodyquiz/ .

Want to know how many calories is in the lunch you just had? Check out the quick search for popular food chains located at http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthtool-food-calorie-counter.

What’s for dinner? Visit the new site from Hy-Vee to access recipes from their SEASONS magazine, including nutritional information for each. Additionally, they frequently include special dietary recipes. Click on http://www.hy-vee.com/seasons/featured-recipes.aspx to access this new tool.
“How do you keep your heart healthy?”

“For starters I am a ‘pepper’ fanatic. I like all kinds of pepper including red, green, orange, white and purple bell peppers. I eat some type of pepper daily, along with other peppers (peppercorns) that are used to season the foods I cook (including cayenne pepper). While peppers provide fiber they also provide B6 and folic acid which reduce the homocysteine levels that damage blood vessels thereby lowering risk of heart attack and stroke. I try to get my heart rate up daily with some type of cardio exercise, even if that is just walking at a brisk pace. And I laugh. Laughter increases your heart rate and also benefits wellness.” Marie Ballew, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health

“I chase my kids around a lot! I also take fish oil daily, stay away from a lot of fried and fatty foods, and try to work out at lunch three times a week.” Michelle Rodemeyer, MO State Public Health Laboratory

“I try to eat enough fruits and vegetables each day.” Mehari Zehaie, Division of Senior and Disability Services

“I hit the gym five days a week. I focus on less processed foods and on getting five fruits/vegetables each day.” Betty Nash, Division of Community and Public Health

“I try to stay away from deep fried, fatty foods. I have also, recently, been avoiding highly processed foods and high in sodium foods. I have not had my cholesterol checked lately, but I will be watching this as I get older.” Christina Bruce, Section for Child Care Regulation, Columbia

We want to hear from you for the next Employee Buzz! “With the weather getting nicer, what is your favorite springtime activity?” For example, “I ride my bike on the Katy Trail.” Email your response to worksitewellness@health.mo.gov. Please tell us if you do not want your name included with your quote.

Move More @ Work: Group Exercise

In November 2012, DHSS staff in the Knipp building formed an exercise group. The group meets two times a week for about 30 minutes over the lunch hour. It is a cardio sculpt class, a combination of strength training and cardio (lunges, squats, jogging in place, etc). Knipp staff of all fitness levels attend and work out at their own pace. Jackie Oden serves as the leader of the group. She sets a great example with her enthusiasm for exercise and healthy habits.

Consider getting some of your co-workers together to start your own fitness group!

Eat Smart @ Work: Buffalo Chicken Salad Wrap

This quick-to-assemble, healthy wrap is a great way to use leftover chicken and to add vegetables to your diet.

Ingredients:
3-4 ounces of chicken breasts
2 whole chipotle peppers
¼ cup white wine vinegar
¼ cup low-calorie mayonnaise
2 stalks celery, diced
2 carrots, cut into matchsticks
1 small yellow onion, diced (about ½ cup)
½ cup thinly sliced rutabaga or other root vegetable
4 ounces spinach, cut into strips
2 whole-grain tortillas (12-inch diameter)

Preparation:
You can use leftover or rotisserie chicken if you have it. If not, preheat oven to 375°F or start grill. Bake or grill chicken breasts for about 10 minutes on each side until interior temperature is 165°F. Remove, cool and cube chicken. In a blender, puree chipotle peppers with white wine vinegar and mayonnaise. Place all ingredients except spinach and tortillas in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Place 2 ounces spinach and half the mixture in each tortilla and wrap. Cut each wrap in half to serve.

Yield: 4 servings

Nutritional Information
Amount per Serving
Calories: 300
Fat: 8g
Saturated fat: 2g
Monounsaturated fat: 3g
Protein: 31g
Carbohydrate: 26g
Fiber: 5g
Cholesterol: 76mg
Sodium: 367mg

Source: Mayo Clinic
http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/heart-healthy-recipes/RE00098

“The groundwork for all happiness is good health.”
~Leigh Hunt
DHSS Wellness Superstar

Terry Black is a Training Coordinator in the Office of Human Resources. His weight had increased over a three year period until he weighed about 238 pounds. In December 2012, Terry and his wife decided to start eating healthier and increasing their physical activity. His goal was to reach 175 to 180 pounds. Terry worked with the nutrition coach through DHSS who assisted him in setting goals, including eating more fruits and vegetables. Since that time, he has increased the amount of fruits and vegetables he consumes to three to five servings a day. He also drinks eight glasses of water each day.

Terry also changed his eating habits to include whole grain rice, pasta and bread. He also eats more salads, which is now a favorite lunch meal.

In order to increase their exercise, Terry and his wife decided to get a Wii in December 2012. He started using customized workouts and by June, needing a more intense program, he upgraded it with strengthening and cardio software. He has now finished this program and is again looking for ways to increase the intensity of his workouts.

His routine includes getting up at 4:15 A.M. to start exercising at 4:30 A.M. He alternates upper body, lower body, full body, curls and presses, with step aerobics on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Saturdays he does both, and Sundays he does one or the other. On Wednesdays he takes off so he can spend time with his wife. She also exercises and counts calories.

Getting up early to exercise makes him feel charged up. And he still gets six or seven hours of sleep per night.

Terry also builds exercise into his daily routines such as walking at work on Walking Wednesdays (and other days). On weekends he purposely does things to keep active such as mowing the lawn or housework. He parks far away from entrances in order to get additional walking exercise.

Terry has reached his goal and now weighs between 175-177 pounds. During a recent checkup, his lab work and blood pressure are in the normal range and his doctor is pleased with the lifestyle changes and the health benefits it has provided.

Quinoa…is it a name or a grain?

Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) is one of those things most people don’t know a lot about. It resembles a grain in use and appearance and it has frequently been called an ancient “grain.” But it’s really a seed. This grain-like crop has been eaten for thousands of years in South America. If you’ve never seen it, quinoa is a small seed that resembles millet or couscous.

Quinoa is a nutritional powerhouse containing a high amount of complete protein, soluble and insoluble fiber, and unsaturated fats. It also contains iron, magnesium and zinc, and is gluten-free.

Like rice, oats, pasta, wheat or couscous, quinoa is very versatile. It can be used as you would any of these grains—as a pilaf, risotto or in soups. Most people eat quinoa mixed with other grains. Try these breakfast ideas: cold cooked quinoa with yogurt and fruit or hot, like oatmeal.

Source: http://nutritioneducationstore.com/blog

Terry feels great after adopting a healthier lifestyle!
As we start another new year, think of it as a time to reinvest in yourself. Make 2014 the year you take advantage of all of the wellness benefits available to you, from both DHSS and Strive for Wellness (Strive).

Strive offers weekly wellness messages that provide quick and simple tips for starting or maintaining healthier habits. As a reminder, all of the statewide campaign materials are posted on the Strive for Wellness page at [http://www.mchcp.org/stateMembers/striveForWellness/index.asp](http://www.mchcp.org/stateMembers/striveForWellness/index.asp). Also in the year ahead, Strive will be offering onsite health clinic services to Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan members at the Truman Building. Look for more information in the next newsletter.

Your DHSS wellness program offers Lunch-N-Learns, health screenings, opportunities to walk or move your body during the workday, and more.

Check out the upcoming wellness events below to be in the know about wellness programming.

As always, the wellness committee welcomes your ideas and encourages your participation in all DHSS and Strive initiatives. Please feel free to provide feedback to your committee members or ambassadors.

Here’s to a happier and healthier 2014!

Sincerely,
Pat Simmons & Michelle Jacobsen
DHSS Wellness Ambassadors

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**Upcoming Wellness Events**

**Walking Wednesdays**
The 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month are Walking Wednesdays. But don’t forget that if there is a 5th Wednesday in a month, that too is a Walking Wednesday! Approved t-shirts are: DHSS Worksite Wellness, Missouri 100 Miles and Tackle the Flu t-shirts. REMINDER: By wearing jeans on a Walking Wednesday, you are committing yourself to walking a total of 30 minutes at break and/or during your lunch hour.

**National Wear Red Day**
Show your support in protecting women’s heart health and inspiring them to take action! Wear red on Friday, February 7th! Look for more details about Wear Red Day in upcoming weekly messages.

**Mamm Van**
Mark your calendar for Thursday, March 20 and Friday, March 21, 2014 for the Ellis Fischel Mamm Van. More information will follow in the weekly messages.

**Blood Pressure Kits**
Keep tabs on your blood pressure by utilizing the blood pressure kits in several locations across the state. For locations, click [here](#).

**Save the Date!**
Wednesday, May 21, 2014 is National Employee Health & Fitness Day! Plan to put your walking shoes on!