

Heart TALK

Heart-healthy and Stroke-free Living with Dr. Amy L. Doneen, DNP, ARNP

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Thoughts
from
Dr. Amy

3 DANGEROUS MYTHS

About Heart Disease that Many Women — and Doctors — Believe



Which is the no. 1 killer of women: heart disease or breast cancer? If you guessed heart disease, congratulations! You're better informed than 45% of women — and many doctors, including cardiologists — according to a shocking survey published in [Journal of the American College of Cardiology](#). Although heart disease kills more women than ALL forms of cancer combined, only 39% of doctors polled ranked it as a top health concern in women. Nor did most doctors feel well prepared to assess female patients for heart disease, the researchers reported.

Yet with early detection and optimal care, cardiovascular (CV) events are preventable. For example, two peer-reviewed studies show that the science-based [BaleDoneen Method](#) is highly effective at preventing, halting or even reversing heart disease, helping people avoid heart attacks and strokes. Here are some common myths about women's heart disease, plus the knowledge women need to take charge of their heart health.

MYTH:
Heart disease is mostly a problem for men.

FACT: Also known as cardiovascular disease (CVD), heart disease strikes more women than men, claiming the lives of nearly 400,000 American women every year (ten times as many deaths as breast cancer causes). Although mortality from heart disease is declining overall, the drop has been greater in men, and among young women (those under age 55), rates are actually rising. Because women and many doctors are unaware of these facts, medical providers often underestimate women's CVD risk, causing them to miss out on potentially lifesaving therapies.

BALEDONEEN TAKEAWAY: ALL women are at potential risk for CVD, which often causes no symptoms until it becomes severe enough to trigger a heart attack or stroke. The good news is that the BaleDoneen Method offers a proven, personalized heart-attack-and-stroke prevention plan that includes female-specific therapies and lifestyle steps to keep your heart healthy at every age, as discussed more fully in the bestselling BaleDoneen book, [Beat the Heart Attack Gene](#).

MYTH:
If a woman has a heart problem, it will usually be detected during her annual physical or wellness exam.

FACT: Although most of the women surveyed had a routine physical or wellness exam in the previous year, only 40% received a heart health assessment. The study reported 71% of women had never asked to be checked for CVD. Instead, they assumed that their provider would alert them if there was a problem. The study also found that when checking women's heart health, very few primary care providers or cardiologists followed female-specific guidelines for CVD risk assessment in women. About half of the doctors used risk calculators, most of which are based on studies of men.

BALEDONEEN TAKEAWAY: A number of studies have shown that risk calculators can be highly inaccurate predictors of which patients might be headed for a heart attack or stroke. That's why the BaleDoneen Method, practiced by hundreds of clinicians worldwide, doesn't rely on risk factor analysis alone: We use lab and imaging tests to directly check each patient for signs of hidden arterial disease, as part of a comprehensive cardiovascular evaluation.

MYTH:
I'm healthy, so I'm not at risk for a heart attack or stroke.

FACT: Although 74% of the women surveyed reported having one or more CVD risk factors — such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure or a family history of heart disease — only 16% had been told they were at risk by their medical provider. As a result, many women have a false sense of security about their heart health. The researchers reported that 63% of women put off going to their medical provider at least sometimes, even though many of them admitted that they should be doing more to keep their heart healthy.

BALEDONEEN TAKEAWAY: Even seemingly healthy people with no obvious risk factors can harbor silent, deadly plaque in their arteries. That's why you shouldn't delay being screened for CVD with a comprehensive BaleDoneen assessment, even if you feel fine. Early detection and treatment helps save women's lives!



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• August Recipe •

Huevos Rancheros Breakfast Sandwich



Ready in just 5 minutes, this delicious recipe can also be made with flour or corn tortillas for a breakfast burrito, or with gluten-free English muffins. [A recent analysis](#) of studies linked eating one egg daily to a 12% drop in stroke risk and found no association with heart disease, while avocados help reduce cholesterol, inflammation and risk for heart attacks, other research suggests.

Check the ingredients on the refried beans. Some brands contain lard, so products labeled “vegetarian” are the best bet to avoid excess calories and animal fat. Beans are rich in protein and heart-healthy fiber and may improve your cholesterol levels. It’s also important to include a side of fresh fruit, with this hearty sandwich, which we recommend as a “treat” option, rather than a daily meal, due to its high carb count. Serves four.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 whole-wheat English muffins, toasted
- 6 tablespoons vegetarian refried beans
- 6 tablespoons guacamole, homemade or store bought
- 4 eggs, fried (use non-fat cooking spray)
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
- Your favorite salsa

Spread 1½ tablespoon beans on the bottom half of each toasted English muffin. Layer with 1½ tablespoon guacamole, a fried egg and ½ tablespoon of cilantro. Top with the other half of the English muffin. Serve with your favorite salsa and enjoy!

Nutritional information per serving (one sandwich): calories: 292; fat: 12 grams; carbs: 34g; protein: 14g; sodium: 547mg; sugar: 7g.

Adapted from
[Busy Girl Healthy World.](#)

An Easy, Delicious Way to Protect Your Heart Health

Following one simple habit every morning could save your life, by reducing risk for heart attack and fatal coronary heart disease (CHD). This healthy practice may also prevent weight gain, which in turn decreases your likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes, some forms of cancer, and other dangerous diseases, including CHD.

The morning ritual that does all this is eating a heart-healthy breakfast, research shows. With “fasting diets” gaining in popularity, the BaleDoneen Method recommends NOT skipping your morning meal. [In a new study](#), doing so was linked to increased risk for low-grade inflammation and blood sugar issues. Here are some delicious nutritional powerhouses to put on your plate in the morning.



of Arterial Health Champions

FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Many studies show that the more fruits and vegetables people eat daily, the lower their risk for cardiovascular events. Intriguingly, eating an apple a day really does keep the doctor away, since eating white fruits and vegetables — such as apples, pears and cauliflower — was linked to 52% drop in stroke risk in a recent 10-year study. [A large 2017 study](#) reports that eating more than 3 servings daily of fruits and vegetables also reduces risk for peripheral artery disease (PAD) by 18%.

LOW-FAT YOGURT OR COTTAGE CHEESE

An excellent source of vitamin D, magnesium, potassium and other heart-protective nutrients, dairy products were associated with a 12% and 13% decreased risk for CHD and stroke respectively in a [2015 analysis](#) of 22 studies that included more than 900,000 participants. The researchers found low-fat dairy to be particularly beneficial. Yogurt is also an excellent source of probiotics (bacteria that enhance gut health).

WHOLE GRAIN CEREAL

Whole grains, such as oats/oatmeal, buckwheat and bulgar, are rich sources of fiber, which can help lower cholesterol and risk for heart disease, stroke, obesity and type 2 diabetes. An [analysis of 10 studies](#) found that for each 10-gram increase in the amount of fiber people eat daily, their risk for fatal CHD fell by 19%. [Another study](#)

reported that people who ate the most fiber were 50% to 58% less likely die from CHD, infectious diseases or respiratory illnesses than those who ate the least fiber.

NUTS

People who eat nuts frequently are 30% to 50% less likely to suffer heart attacks, sudden cardiac death or heart disease, compared those who eat them rarely, according to very large studies. Among their cardiovascular benefits are improvements in levels of both LDL (bad) and HDL (good) cholesterol, and protection against blood clots that could trigger a heart attack or stroke, [Harvard University reports](#). Since nuts are high in fat, we advise eating them in moderate amounts.

FISH

Oily cold-water fish, such as salmon or herring, are high in heart-healthy Omega-3 fatty acids, as well as CoQ10 and selenium, nutrients with antioxidant effects that have been shown to dramatically reduce death from cardiovascular causes.

COFFEE

Two new studies that included more than 500,000 people link coffee consumption to longer life. Researchers also found that the invigorating brew reduces risk for CHD, stroke, respiratory illnesses, diabetes, cancer and kidney disease, among other ailments.